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A MARRIAGE
IN HIGH LIFE.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHORESS OF 'FLIRTATION.'

" I was compelled to *her*—but I love *thee*
By love's own sweet constraint."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages, which I now offer to the public, may, perhaps, not attract general interest; they contain merely a few passages in the history of the heart and feelings of an individual placed in singular and trying circumstances; but those who should recognize beneath the feigned name of Lady Fitzhenry, one whom they may remember to have seen in the gay scenes of

fashionable life, will probably feel some interest in the events which occasioned her first introduction into the world, and her sudden disappearance from it.

THE EDITOR.

MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

A mon avis, l'Hymen et ses liens
 Sont les plus grands, ou des maux, ou des biens ;
 Point de milieu ; l'état du mariage
 Est des humains le plus cher avantage.
 Quand le rapport des esprits, des cœurs
 Des sentimens, des gouts, et des humeurs,
 Serre ces liens tissus par la nature
 Que l'amour forme, et que l'honneur épure.

L'ENFANT PRODIGUE.

TOWARDS the end of a London spring,
 that is to say, about the middle of Au-
 gust, was married by special license,

at her father's house in Harley Street, Emmeline Benson to Ernest, Lord Fitzhenry, only son of the Earl of Arlingford.

The ceremony was like most others of its kind; the drawing-room was crowded with relations and friends on both sides, dressed in congratulatory smiles, and new bridal finery.

Emmeline's father, an opulent city merchant and banker, appeared arrayed in a complete new suit for the occasion. The first gloss was not off his coat, which hung stiff upon him, as if not yet reconciled to the homely person to which it was destined to belong, while each separate bright button reflected the collected company. His countenance glowing with happiness, he busied himself in attentions to his guests, pro-

voking, by his remarks, those congratulations which flattered his pride and parental fondness; and, with bustling joy, making the necessary preliminary arrangements for the ceremony about to take place, which was to raise his only and beloved child to that elevated situation in life, in which it had ever been the first wish of his heart to see her placed, and which his partial affection thought her so well fitted to grace.

Mrs. Benson's feelings seemed of a less joyous nature, and sometimes, even a tear started into her eye, in spite of herself, when she endeavoured to smile in return to the kind wishes of her friends. She was too fond a mother not to feel painfully the loss of her daughter; and that feeling was not unmixed

with anxiety, in giving her to one of whom (of late years at least) she personally knew but little.

All were now assembled excepting the bride and bridegroom. The father of the latter, apparently as much delighted as Mr. Benson himself with the intended union, being of course among the company. But Lord Fitzhenry did not appear! Various conjectures were formed as to his absence. One person declared he had observed his carriage at the door of his lodgings as he had passed; another, that he was certain he had seen him in a distant part of the town not long before. The delay was beginning to be awkward, and at every distant sound of wheels, both fathers looked anxiously along the street, but in vain.

Gradually the conversation of the guests lowered itself into whispers, as some new surmise was started with regard to the possible cause of this strange absence of the most important personage at so important a moment. But even these whispers died away from lack of new ideas on the subject, and the now total silence was only occasionally broken by the rustling of the clergyman's surplice, when he left his post before the large family prayer-book (laid open ready at the marriage ceremony) with the benevolent wish, by some commonplace observation, to dissipate the unpleasant feelings which seemed to infect all present; or when he followed Mr. Benson to the window, whither he had taken up his station of observation in

the hopes of being the first to give the much wished-for news of the approaching bridegroom. Poor Mrs. Benson's cheeks became momentarily of a deeper and deeper dye, and she betrayed her anxious agitation by the nervous twitching of the gold chain round her neck, to which was suspended her daughter's portrait, and the constant arranging of her lace shawl, which she regularly each time pulled off her shoulders. At last, the welcome rattle of a carriage driving furiously was heard. It stopped at Mr. Benson's door, and in a minute Lord Fitzhenry, with a flushed cheek, hurried into the drawing-room.

Awkward as such an entrance must naturally be, still his agitation seemed even beyond what the circumstances of

the moment would have been likely to produce on a young man of the world.

Lord Fitzhenry, at twenty-seven, was remarkably good-looking; and on his countenance and whole figure was that stamp of high birth, which, even where beauty does not exist, more than compensates for its absence. The general character of his countenance was that of openness and good humour; but an agitated, even a melancholy expression now clouded it, which all noticed.

“Marriage is certainly an awful ceremony,” whispered an elderly lady to Mrs. Benson; “and I am glad to see his lordship betraying so much feeling and seriousness at such a moment. It is a good sign in a young man.” The poor trembling mother scarcely heard the

remark, nor was there much time for more observation, for Mr. Benson had already left the room, and in a few minutes returned, leading in his daughter.

Emmeline was nineteen. She was slightly formed, had a most winning countenance, innocent laughing eyes, and a delicate, fair complexion, although now deepened into crimson, in her cheeks, by the agitation of the moment, as was very apparent, even through the folds of the beautiful lace veil that hung all over her.

The marriage ceremony commenced immediately. As it proceeded, the bridegroom trembled violently. When called upon to pronounce his vow, his voice was scarcely audible; and as he

placed the ring on his bride's hand, he nearly let it fall to the ground.

But all was soon finally said and done—so few are the words which, once read over, totally change our existence, and fix our fate in life for ever! The usual congratulations passed, and the chaise and four, decorated with bridal favours, rattled to the door.

Emmeline threw herself sobbing into her mother's arms—the first sob, since those of childhood, which had ever been wrung from her light heart. Her proud father gaily kissed her cheek, addressing her by her new title of “Lady Fitzhenry;” then, drawing her arm within his, hurried her down stairs, placed her in the carriage, into which the bridegroom followed, and the “happy pair”

drove off as fast as four post horses could convey them.

How blank such moments are to those who remain behind ! The company soon separated after the usual breakfast, and Mr. and Mrs. Benson were left alone.

All excitement, over the deserted mother's spirits then sank ; mournfully she paced the now silent room, and mechanically removed from the table Emmeline's work-box, which she had left behind her, gazing on her name, engraven on the lid, till her tears burst forth. Her distress roused Mr. Benson from the trance of exultation in which he had been lost as he watched the last bridal carriage that had driven from the door, and he kindly hastened to his wife.

“Why, my good woman, crying! and on such a day! when you should be so happy—for shame! for shame!”

Mrs. Benson shook her head mournfully. “God grant it indeed *prove* a happy day! may our beloved child be so!” and she sighed deeply.

“Why, how can you doubt she will?” said her husband; “she has every thing this world can give; rank!” (and he laid a great stress on that word,) “riches, youth; and, for a husband, a most excellent and accomplished young man, of whom every one speaks well. None of your gamblers, jockies, spendthrifts. I am sure Emmeline and ourselves are the envy of all our acquaintance. Any one might be pleased and proud to see his daughter so well married.”

Mrs. Benson again sighed, wiped away her tears, and then quietly returned to her usual avocations.

Meanwhile, Lord and Lady Fitzhenry travelled on, and a few hours brought them to Arlingford Hall, which, on his son's marriage, Lord Arlingford had given up to him, meaning to reside himself at a villa at Wimbledon; his health, which had of late been very precarious, making a near residence to town advisable.

Arlingford Hall, which was in Hampshire, had been completely repaired and refurnished for the new married couple; Lord Fitzhenry having himself been much there lately, superintending the alterations. At least, that occupation was always mentioned as an apology for

his absence from town, and for his not attending more assiduously on his future bride.

During the journey, Lord Fitzhenry's agitation and abstraction rather increased, and it could no longer escape Emmeline's observation. His conversation was forced; in his manner towards her he was punctiliously attentive and civil—but perfectly cold and distant.

When they arrived at Arlingford, all the servants were assembled in the hall to receive them; a numerous and respectable group, who, by the tears of joy which some of them shed, seemed most sincerely to partake in the supposed happiness of their young master. One of them, who stood apart from the rest, even ventured to address him with par-

ticular congratulation as with the familiarity of an old friend, and to give Emmeline his blessing.

“ Thank you, Reynolds, thank you,” said Fitzhenry hastily, as he shook the old man by the hand.

Emmeline’s heart was cast in nature’s best mould, and this simple action of her husband found its way to it. She smiling raised her tearful eyes to his face, but the expression she there found, soon made her again cast them down. The scene seemed to have totally discomposed him; and, in an awkward, hurried manner, thanking the rest of the servants, he led the way to the drawing-room. Dinner was ordered directly, and all seemed so zealous to serve their young master and mistress,

that it was not long coming, but still there was an awful pause.

Lord Fitzhenry walked up and down the room, forced himself to speak, then, suddenly, as if recollecting that some degree of gallant attention was to be expected from him, a bridegroom of only six or eight hours, he hurried up to Emmeline and helped her off with her shawl; but his manner was so odd, so unlover-like, that it at last alarmed even her innocent, unsuspecting mind, and she timidly asked if he was not well. He started at her question, and seemed much embarrassed; but, after a moment's pause, replied, "The journey, the hurry, I suppose; indeed, I hardly know what, but something has given me a dreadful headache."

And then, as if roused by her remark to a sense of the strangeness of his behaviour, he put more force upon himself, showed her the public rooms, her own sitting room, in which were collected books, musical instruments, and every possible means of amusement. In answer to her enquiries, explained to Emmeline who were her new relations that hung framed on the walls; and, when she admired the comfort of the house, and particularly of her own boudoir, he said something about hoping she would be happy in it, but the phrase died away in uncertain accents.

Dinner at length came to his relief; he then was attention itself, but the repast could not last for ever; and, when the servants had left the room, Lord

Fitzhenry's embarrassment returned worse than before. Emmeline had lived so little in society, and, consequently, had so little the habit of general conversation—and the six years during which she and her husband had been separated, had so entirely broken off the first intimacy which had existed between them when children, that, timid in his company, and now unassisted and unencouraged by him, she felt it impossible to keep up any thing like conversation. It was, therefore, no small relief when, after an awkwardly protracted silence, she saw him leave the room.

As the door closed upon him, Emmeline involuntarily fell into a reverie not of the most pleasing nature. "This is all very strange!" thought she; and over

her usually gay countenance a sadness crept. She sighed, she hardly knew why; and, when her thoughts wandered back to her former happy home, her parents, and their doating fondness, some “natural tears” stole down her cheek, and she felt herself, as in a dream, neglected and deserted.

But Emmeline was not *in love*; and her husband’s behaviour, though it astonished her, and though she felt it was not what it ought to be, did not wound her heart as it otherwise would have done.

Emmeline was very young, even for her age. With a most superior mind and character, with tender, even romantic feelings, her innocence and simplicity of heart were so great, and all her qualities

had as yet lain so dormant, that her character was scarcely known even to herself; and, to common observers, she passed for a mere gay, good-humoured, pleasing girl. She was, however, no common character, nor what one would have supposed the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benson to have been. Nature sometimes seems to amuse herself with playing such fanciful tricks; and Emmeline's natural superiority made it appear as if she had been thrown into a sphere totally different from that for which she had been originally designed, and that she now was only restored to her own proper station, when raised, by her marriage, to be the companion of Fitzhenry.

To explain how such a being came to

be thus passively united to a man who seemed already to have repented the step he had taken, it will be necessary to go back a little in our narrative.

CHAPTER II.

Do I entice you ? do I speak you fair ?
Or rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you—I do not, nor I cannot love you ?

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

LORD ARLINGFORD had, early in life, entangled himself in pecuniary difficulties by every species of thoughtless extravagance, in which an expensive, fashionable wife had assisted him. Her fortune and health both soon declined, and a consumption rapidly carried her to the grave while still in the prime of life,

and when her only child, Ernest, was but ten years old. That which extravagance began, indolence soon completed ; and long before his son came of age, Lord Arlingford found himself, in the language of the world, to be totally ruined.

Mr. Benson had been always much employed and consulted by Lord Arlingford's family in all matters relating to business ; and to him, in the present desperate situation of his affairs, his lordship was obliged to have recourse for advice and assistance. Mr. Benson had toiled all his life as a merchant, and was now one of the most opulent bankers in London. He had an only child ; and to her he meant to bequeath all his wealth, provided she made a marriage to his choice ; by which, he meant one in

that rank of life, which Mr. Benson, with all his useful good sense, he had the folly to imagine essential to human happiness.

Being every way an excellent man of business, Mr. Benson was appointed to be one of the trustees, into whose hands it was now deemed necessary to consign Lord Arlingford's estate; in order, if possible, to retrieve his affairs, and protect the interests of his son.

One day, when talking over his difficulties with his client, and when Emmeline was but seven years old, Mr. Benson first proposed, in the form of a joke, as a means by which all might be set to rights, that their children should be united in marriage. He finished his speech by a loud laugh; but it was one of mere agitation, for he anxiously looked

into Lord Arlingford's face to see how such a proposal agreed with the ancient, aristocratic pride of the Fitzhenrys.

Lord Arlingford for a minute made no reply ; he kept his eyes fixed on the parchment he held in his hands. The table before him was covered with deeds, bonds, mortgages, and every awful sign of the irretrievable state of his affairs ; and, strange as it may appear, he caught immediately at the idea, as to that which alone could save him from utter ruin. His answer, when at last it came, transported the ambitious banker with joy ; and by degrees, and by constantly treating of the subject, the two fathers seemed to think it was a matter they had but to settle between themselves, and that there could be no difficulty whatever in a scheme

which was to give to both, what they both wanted. Mr. Benson's promises were most liberal, and Lord Arlingford subdued all the hereditary pride of his feelings, and seemed quite content to lay himself and his family under obligations to a man on whom he in return conferred so much honour.

As a first step towards bringing about this favourite scheme, Ernest, when at home for his holidays, was constantly sent to Mr. Benson's, where he was of course indulged in his every boyish fancy, and every species of amusement imagined for him in which little Emmeline could take a part.

On her birthday every year, a ball was given by Mrs. Benson, which was opened by her and young Lord Fitz-

henry, while the two fathers looked on in admiration, and declared that they were born for each other.

At twenty, Fitzhenry left Oxford ; he was then to remain abroad for three years ; and, at his return, it was settled that the marriage should take place ; although as yet, nothing had been said on the subject to either of those most concerned in the plan.

Before his departure, however, Lord Arlingford thought it proper to open the business to his son, and also to lay before him the embarrassed state of his affairs.

Such disclosures make little impression on young minds, to whom, as yet unacquainted either with its value or want, money is but a vague sort of blessing ; and Lord Arlingford was forced to overcharge the picture to give it due

influence on his son. He talked much of his own distresses, his sacrifices for the sake of his dear Ernest, and, when he had worked on his filial affections, mentioned merely as a passing thought the long projected plan of his union with Miss Benson. Ernest, starting, coloured, and stammered out some undecided words. But finding no *positive objection* made, Lord Arlingford pushed on the affair—praised Emmeline—(then only thirteen years old,) extorted from Ernest first, that he thought her a fine girl, and at last a sort of agreement that he would think of the proposal, and, on his return from abroad, marry her, and make his father happy.

Mr. Benson was informed of the favourable progress of their scheme, which

he furthered by every means in his power ; and Emmeline was soon taught to look upon Ernest as her future husband. On his taking leave of them before his departure for the Continent, he kissed her smooth young cheek, addressing her by the name of his little wife. But neither the kiss nor the appellation brought even an additional tinge of colour into that cheek ; although she might childishly have grieved at the loss of her almost only companion.

During the first months of his absence, Lord Fitzhenry wrote two or three times to Emmeline, once when sending her a watch from Geneva, and again with a chain from Venice ; but he soon found more interesting occupations than composing letters for the capacity of a mere child : the boy had grown into a man,

and if he did not actually forget the engagement into which his father had drawn him, he allowed it but little to occupy his thoughts.

Lord Fitzhenry first visited Italy ; at Naples, he formed an intimacy with the English minister then residing there ; and, on the removal of that minister to Vienna, Ernest followed him.

The three years allotted for his residence abroad, had already nearly elapsed ; but, having acquired a taste for the habits of the Continent, Ernest begged for longer leave of absence ; and by his letters, no less than by the accounts of all those who met with him, his foreign life seemed so much to have improved his mind and manners, that Lord Arlingford, whose purely worldly character saw little beyond such acquirements, agreed to his

prolonging his stay; and he was the more willing to acquiesce in his son's wishes, as Emmeline, scarcely yet sixteen, was still in appearance and manners so much of a child, that any contemplation of her immediate marriage would have been premature.

Lord Fitzhenry, at twenty-three, with excellent and even superior abilities, naturally noble feelings, strong sentiments of honour, and a warmly affectionate heart, wanted only those serious principles of conduct, which his father had neither bestowed on, nor ever required from him. Had Lord Arlingford been asked whether or no he was an atheist, he would have resented the question as an affront; but, nevertheless, religion had never occupied his own thoughts,

and had never in any distinct form entered into the education of his son. The companion he selected for him during his residence on the Continent, was a young man of considerable abilities, who had been destined for the law ; but who, having been early led abroad, and having a decided turn for a wandering life, was too happy to return to scenes in which he delighted, and to give up Lincoln's Inn, and studies, for which he had no relish, for the existence he preferred, in present, and the future chance of Lord Arlingford's patronage.

Such a companion, gay and thoughtless as himself, was not likely to supply the neglected part of Lord Fitzhenry's education ; and thus, although gifted by nature with a mind and heart formed

for virtue, in its highest acceptation, Fitzhenry was turned adrift on the world without any help or defence against its snares, except those common rules of worldly honour by which men, who may infringe nearly every law, human and divine, fancy themselves to be guided.

At Vienna, Lord Fitzhenry became acquainted with Lady Florence Mostyn, and that chance acquaintance influenced his whole future life and conduct.

Lady Florence, who had early in life been married to a man whom she had never loved, and whose understanding and character she could not respect, had every allurement, every charm to captivate, except that of innocence. Such a deficiency one might have hoped would have preserved a refined mind like that

of Fitzhenry's from her chains ; but, under the influence of passion, artfully excited, and the example of the society in which he lived, he fell completely into the snare purposely laid for him, and became the slave of an artful, bewitching, and violent woman.

In the intoxication of her society, every thing was forgotten or disregarded. In vain were his father's repeated injunctions, that he should return home ; in vain his self-reproaches at losing, in idleness, some of the best years of his life. And it was only when alarming accounts of Lord Arlingford's health roused his better feelings, that he was induced to tear himself away from Greece, whither Lady Florence and her passive, accommodating husband had accompanied

him; and, in the middle of winter, to set off for England with the hope and promise that they would join him there early in spring.

Six years had now elapsed since Lord Fitzhenry had left home. His person, character, manners—all had changed. His “Little Wife” was nearly forgotten; and when she did chance to cross his mind, he looked upon his engagement with her as a mere joke of childhood, and trusted his father would do the same.

From Italy, where he found the accounts of Lord Arlingford were still very alarming, he travelled day and night to make up for past negligence, and found his parent on his arrival, but slowly recovering from a very dangerous illness.

Real feeling and affection broke forth

from Fitzhenry's selfish, worldly father, on again beholding his son; and beholding him, as in truth he was, a son to be proud of.

Lord Arlingford's illness, by weakening his nerves, had given to his manners an appearance of sentiment unusual to him; and Ernest almost wondered how he could have been such a monster as so long to have deserted him. A constant visitor in his father's sick room, he found Mr. Benson. With a feeling not unmixed with remorse he warmly thanked him for having supplied his place, and inquired after Mrs. and Miss Benson, as after old friends of his boyhood.

“ Well, quite well,” said Mr. Benson; “ but Emmeline is so grown, that you will hardly know her again:” however she

is not altered in any way, I assure you ; she has not forgotten her old playfellow ;” and he looked cunningly into Fitzhenry’s face, to observe the effect of this flattering assurance. “ You have been a sad rambler, Lord Fitzhenry,” he continued ; “ but now you are returned to old England, we shall, I hope, all live comfortably together ; and I am sure you will be quite delighted with Emmy, although perhaps she is not just like your foreign madams ; but none the worse for that I suspect—they don’t make such good wives ; and now that you have, as I may say, sown your wild oats,” he added with a laugh, “ you will not be sorry to sit down at home and enjoy a little home-bred, quiet English comfort.”

Fitzhenry saw but too plainly the drift

of all this, and he was totally at a loss for an answer. His eyes, fearful of meeting those of Mr. Benson, wandered round the room, till they fell on a view of Naples which hung over the chimney. The sight was not favourable to the picture of *English happiness* which Mr. Benson had just been presenting to him. Hours of rapture produced by the first intoxication of passion, beneath an Italian sky, and amid scenes calculated to enhance every feeling of romantic enjoyment, rose up before him in an instant, and formed such a contrast to the homely, domestic comfort just held out to him, that his very soul sickened at the thought; and, making some awkward sort of vague answer to Mr. Benson's *very pointed* remark, he abruptly left him.

Ernest had expected to have found his father irritated against him, in consequence of his long absence and his frequent excuses for not obeying his summons to return home. He also feared that the real cause of his protracted stay might have reached England, and he dreaded how much of his story, since they had parted, might have been made known to Lord Arlingford. But the manner of his father was so perfectly kind and cordial, that it reassured Ernest as to his secret being as yet safe, and at the same time filled his affectionate heart with gratitude and self reproach.

Some days after his arrival, when talking on various subjects connected with the place, estate, &c., Lord Arlingford suddenly said, “ Mr. Benson, as

soon as I am a little better, and fit for visitors, you must write in my name, and invite Mrs. Benson and Emmeline to come here. Ernest must be impatient to see his little wife. Eh, my boy ?”

Ernest did not parry this second attack any better than the first—he started, and stammered out something about “pleasure, honour.” But his father did not, or would not, see his reluctance to touch on the subject ; he returned again and again to the charge, said his happiness, his life even, depended upon the marriage ; and by the nervous irritation which illness had produced, and which opposition to his will increased, Ernest feared he spoke truly.

Harassed and perplexed, Ernest at last took courage, and resolved to confess to

his father the attachment he had formed abroad—his unalterable, violent, decided devotion to another. Lord Arlingford seemed breathless with anger and anxiety, and imperatively desired him to inform him who was the object of it.

Lord Fitzhenry cleared his voice, rose from his chair, paced the room, and twice, in vain, tried to speak; but at last making an effort, “she is a married woman,” he said, “Lady Florence Mostyn.” The name was scarcely audible.

“And is that *all*?” replied his father, much relieved. “Don’t think you are telling us any thing new; we have heard of your pranks abroad, my boy; but you will not make the worse husband for

having passed through the fire. And as for your *unalterable* attachment, that is all nonsense. So I thought, at your age, with *my* first love; for I had two or three *affairs* of the sort before I was married; and, indeed, never quite forgot one of my favourites."

"But surely, Sir, with such feelings——!"

"Feeling! stuff again," replied Lord Arlingford. "Why really, Ernest, you have learnt little of the world in your travels; I am sure any one of your young friends would laugh to hear you give such a reason for refusing a most excellent, and, I must add, advantageous marriage."

Although without principles, Ernest was shocked at his father's levity; he

was in all the heroic romance of passion; to love more than one, to plight his faith to another, did not strike him as morally, religiously wrong, but as sacrilege to the one adored being. All he could obtain, however, was delay, and that his father would allow him some little time for reflection.

Thus passed some months. Lord Fitzhenry occasionally met the Benson family; but Emmeline he hardly looked at, hardly noticed; although, when in her society, his manner towards her was perfectly civil; but it was the civility of indifference; his thoughts were fixed on another, and had he been asked the colour of Emmeline's hair or eyes, he probably could not have answered.

Spring arrived, and with it Lady Flo-

rence. This event did not further Lord Arlingford's plan. Fitzhenry was more and more decided in his objections, and in his determination not to fulfil what his father called his engagement.

Many violent altercations passed between them, and, at last, in one of these agitating scenes, Lord Arlingford was seized with an apoplectic fit, and (as Ernest thought) fell dead at his feet. Horror-stricken, he raised him from the ground; medical assistance was procured, and life and hope returned after some days of dreadful apprehension and suspense; but the impression left was too strong on his mind to allow of further resistance; and, in an unguarded moment, Fitzhenry, attacked on every side, gave his reluctant consent to the

hated union. His father allowed him no time to retract. His proposals were immediately made; though not without a secret hope, on Fitzhenry's part, of their being rejected, which, owing to the marked neglect with which he had ever treated her whose hand he claimed, seemed not unlikely. But, contrary to his expectations, his offer was accepted.

Emmeline, as has before been stated, was remarkably young and innocent for her age; she had been brought up in the idea that Lord Fitzhenry was to be her husband; and, although without any very decided preference for him, and with a heart perfectly free, she had looked to her marriage as to a thing of course, and as to an event that was to secure her happiness.

His indifference, however, had not escaped her observation; and, her cheek reddening with offended pride, she mentioned it to her father, when, breathless with delight, he came to announce to her that Lord Fitzhenry claimed her as his bride.

Mr. Benson ridiculed what he called her conceit, her romance; exaggerated into compliments many a simply *civil* thing which Fitzhenry had, or possibly had *not*, said of her; set forth all the advantages of the marriage; used every argument which he knew her affectionate deference to him would give weight to; even hinted at his word being pledged, till he succeeded at last in silencing her doubts and scruples. The good and pious Mrs. Benson too was not quite free from worldly vanities; she told her-

self, and she told Emmeline, that so good a son must make a good husband ; that it would be such a comfort to see her settled in life with one whom she had known since a boy, and of whom she knew so much good.

At last, with something between a smile and a sigh, Emmeline gave her consent, and all was thus finally arranged :

Seven thousand a-year was firmly settled on Lord Fitzhenry, and the residue of Mr. Benson's immense property promised at his death. He added likewise a *few thousands* of ready money for plate, jewels, equipages, &c. ; "in order," as he said, "to set the young people a-going."

Every one was satisfied but poor Ernest. To his feelings, all this was hateful ; and he was doubly shocked

when he found, during the legal details into which he had now to enter, that Arlingford Hall, the abode of his childhood, although it had been long in the family, yet from not being entailed like the rest of the property, had only been saved by Mr. Benson's liberality; and, that in the involved perplexity of his father's affairs and the urgency of his creditors, all the expenses of his late election had been defrayed from the same source.

Sick at heart, as soon as he could extricate himself from lawyers and papers, Ernest signified his intention of leaving town, in order, as he let it be understood, to superintend the repairs at Arlingford, but, in fact, to fly to Lady Florence, who was still in the country.

It was their first meeting since his marriage had been declared; and with an unprincipled, impassioned woman, he had to undergo scenes still more agonizing than those with his father.

Fitzhenry's love for Lady Florence was far beyond her power of appreciating—unable to do justice to his character, she could not trust to such devotion as he expressed, and as he really felt. He believed that for his sake she had sacrificed both honour and virtue, and his whole life, his every affection, he conceived would hardly repay the debt.

Ernest's heart was capable of love of the purest, noblest kind; and, even towards so unworthy an object, it partook more of the nature of his own character than of her's who had inspired

it. During the period employed in preparations for his nuptials, instead of attending on his bride, Fitzhenry never left Lady Florence. Her power seemed strengthened by the very circumstances that should have lessened it; he accompanied her to town; and, even the morning of his marriage, on her entreating to see him, if but for a moment, he had flown to her bewitching presence.

A most violent scene ensued; it ended by a solemn vow on his part to remain true to her, his first, his only love, in thought, word, and deed. That Emeline should merely be the mistress of his house; that, in public, he should behave to her with perfect attention and civility, but nothing more.

Hardly knowing what he did, and not

till long after the hour appointed for the celebration of his nuptials, he left Lady Florence for Mr. Benson's house. Hence his flushed cheek, and his agitated manner, the too true indications of his troubled soul.

Fitzhenry had no distinct religious feelings; but still, when he heard the sacred vow he was to pronounce, (and of which he had never thought,) with his lips still vibrating with that he had pledged to Lady Florence; no wonder those lips quivered. Although no dread of the anger of his God appalled his mind, yet, as a man of honour, he felt the atrocity of the act. Of Emmeline, of the poor victim, who stood trembling beside him, he hardly thought. He looked upon her as a mere obedient

child without a character; perhaps, even worse, an ambitious, worldly being; and all his thoughts, all his compassion, were bestowed on Lady Florence and himself.

Fitzhenry wanted neither decision nor character. During their melancholy journey to Arlingford Hall, he had sufficiently surmounted his agitation to have decided on his conduct. He resolved to tell all to Emmeline, to let her fully enjoy the honours, the worldly advantages of the situation he thought she had in her union with him sought; to assure her he would ever endeavour to make her happy, but that she must never hope for his affections.

Often, after an awful pause, he resolved to speak, but each time his cou-

rage failed him ; and finding all explanation by word of mouth impossible, he then resolved on writing to her. It was to compose this letter, therefore, that, after dinner, he left his bride, as has before been said.

Such a letter was not easily written ; and Emmeline had some time to ruminate on her situation, before he returned. At last he came. He seemed in the feverish state of one who has taken a desperate resolution : he hurried up to Emmeline ; asked her if she was not fatigued ? if he should ring for candles ? and then, without waiting for an answer, rung the bell violently till it broke. His hand shook so much, that he tried in vain to tie the string together again. Emmeline smiling said, she supposed she was

more used to strings and knots, and begged to assist him. As she took the cord, her hand accidentally touched his—it was icy cold.

Reynolds, the old servant, brought in the candles, and asked, if his lordship, “if my lady,” would not have any supper? any wine and water? “Yes, some wine directly,” said Fitzhenry, as if hardly conscious of his demand.

When it came, he endeavoured to pour out some for Emmeline; but twice, from the nervous shaking of his hand, he was forced to put down the bottle.

Emmeline was really alarmed. “Surely,” again, she said timidly, “you are very unwell.” He did not seem to heed her, but drank off a large goblet of wine, and then, with a steadier voice and

manner said—" I have something on my mind which I must make known to you—perhaps I should have done it sooner—I thought it best for both of us to write it," and he held out his letter—" Take it with you into your own room," he added, seeing she was going to break the seal. He took up a candle, gave it her, went with her to the door, put his hand on the lock, and said—" When you have read this, forgive me if you can ;" then hastily seizing her hand, which he almost convulsively grasped, he left her.

What poor Emmeline's feelings were, can be better imagined than described.

In one short moment, a thousand vague fears and horrors passed through her mind. It was *her* turn now to trem-

ble, as, with the dreaded letter in her hand, she hurried to her own room. She there found her maid, whose presence disconcerted her much; but she resolved to take off her gown speedily, and then dismiss her. Never before, she thought, had her attendant been so slow and tedious. She entangled or pulled every string into a knot. At last, her gown off—that beautiful lace gown in which her poor mother had that morning, with so much pride, arrayed her—all her bridal finery laid aside, she told her maid she wanted nothing more.

“Nothing more, my lady!” said the maid astonished; “shall I not put up your ladyship’s hair? Shall I not wait to take away your candle? Mrs. Ben-

son desired me to"—and she stopped short.

"No, I want nothing," again said Emmeline, in a voice she could hardly command. The woman stared, busied herself still some time in the room, and, at length, reluctantly departed.

When she was gone, Emmeline sat for several minutes with the letter in her hand, before she had courage to open it. At length, taking a violent resolution, she broke the seal, and read as follows:—

"When you have read this, you will, I fear, be tempted to upbraid and curse the writer; but I act according to my conscience, to my sense of honour, in imparting to you what I am going to un-

fold—at least, you shall not *now* accuse me of deceiving you—I think, I trust, I never have done so; for little as you have, I believe, lived in the world, still, unless purposely, artfully concealed from you, you must have been aware, that my affections have long since been disposed of, and that, at my return from abroad, they were no longer mine to bestow.

“ Under such circumstances, I never should have renewed the offer of my *hand*; but parental authority, and the distressing and perplexing situation in which I found myself placed, extracted from me my consent to our marriage. But even in so doing, I did not attempt to *deceive*. You cannot accuse me of having, in any way, endeavoured to gain

your affections. You saw me as I was, indifferent to you, and you were at liberty to refuse me : but you were content to become my wife on these terms—that is to say, of bearing my name, and sharing the poor advantages which rank affords.

“ These you still *may*, still *shall* enjoy : but nothing more can I offer you ; for every feeling of my soul is another’s—forgive me for saying so ; but this is no moment for disguise of any sort. To that other, I am bound by every tie, every vow of affection and honour. You will be shocked at hearing such sentiments from *me*—from your *husband* ; and I should consider myself to be indeed the unprincipled villain you may deem me, if, with such feelings, I could, for a minute, look upon you in any

other light than that of a sister. I know full well what love is; and you do not, cannot love me. Therefore I feel not your injuries to be what they otherwise would. You shall enjoy all the worldly advantages you have sought in your marriage with me—all the happiness which wealth—your own wealth—can bestow; and it shall be my endeavour, as far as I can, to make your life happy. You shall be completely mistress in your own house, and of all your actions. Your comfort shall ever be consulted; and I think I can venture to say for myself, that you may depend on my kindness, and even on my friendship; but my affections as a *lover*, as a *husband*, while the same heart beats in my breast, can never be yours.

“ If I may venture, claiming no other right of a husband, to make a request, it is that this subject may never, in any way, directly or indirectly, after this fatal day, be mentioned between us. With regard to your own parents, and to my father, your own good sense and delicacy will, I dare say, dictate to you what conduct to pursue. But if you cannot agree to these, I confess humiliating terms—if you desire an immediate separation, you have but to name your wishes. I will tell all to the world, bear all the blame, and agree to any arrangement which you and your father may choose to dictate.

“ Whatever you have to say, write immediately, and put your letter into the adjoining room. In a short time all will

be at rest in the house. I will then myself go for it. If possible, every thing must be fully settled and understood between us before we meet to-morrow morning.

“FITZHENRY.”

CHAPTER III.

My husband! no not mine—but we were wedded;
This ring was here in hallowed nuptial placed;
A priest did bless it.

ELLEN.

ALL those who have had trials in this world—and who has not?—must know that there are moments in our life during which we seem to live centuries! and that a few hours sometimes are sufficient to rouse, influence, and form a character for ever.

So was it with poor Emmeline! She who had never known a sorrow—she who had looked to her future life as to

one scene of bright enjoyment, on a sudden saw the picture changed, and beheld nothing but trials, disappointment, mortification, and sorrow. She had at once to decide, and on one of the most important steps probably in her life, without a single friend to counsel and uphold her: and he, who should have been that friend, that support, was the one against whom she had to arm herself, and exert energies of character, of which she did not even know herself to be possessed.

What Fitzhenry had said was true—she did not love him; that is to say, was not *in love* with him; but she had entertained a sort of girlish affection for the companion of her early youth, and it was impossible not to admire the hand-

some, accomplished, informed being he now was. Her innocent mind adding to these prepossessions, the light in which she had ever been taught to consider him, of her future husband, gave to her feelings something sacred and tender, so that she had looked to her union with him with stronger anticipations of happiness, than those which mere obedience to her father's wishes could have given.

Fitzhenry's letter fell from her hands, and almost hysteric sobs escaped from her heart. "What have I done to be so cruelly used, so scorned, so upbraided!" she could not help ejaculating; and again she seized the fatal letter. "He despises me for having trusted him; he even reproaches me for that, in which

he alone is to blame. She would leave him ; leave those paltry honours which he thought had been her object ; leave him that wealth which had been the motive (she could no longer doubt it) of her having been sought in marriage by him ; and with the vehemence of indignant feeling, she directly seized on a pen, in order to demand an immediate and total separation.

But scarcely had she written the first word, when, with the natural timidity of a young girl, she shrunk from the responsibility and *enterprise* of so desperate a step, and from all the publicity which she would, by it, draw on herself. She laid down her pen ; pressed, with both hands, her throbbing temples, as if to quiet their agitated pulsa-

tions ; and then, returning to the fatal letter, she perused it again and again, till gradually her most angry feelings were calmed. She *could* not curse him—*would* not upbraid him. His language to her, though harsh, was so open, so honourable ! and then, with the happy buoyancy of youth, and of an innocent, unbroken mind—“ I will make him love me yet,” she thought—“ I will so consult his wishes in every thing ; so play my hard part, that he shall see I am not the mere child, the worldly insensible fool he thinks me ; he must in time love me, and we shall still be happy.”

This was what her *feelings* dictated ; and this line of conduct she told herself her duty to her parents required of her. She would not break their hearts by let-

ting them know how they had been deceived ; but, for their sakes, she would submit to her fate.

Happy in having thus reconciled her duties to her inclinations, she could not help picturing to herself *that* future to which, with such fortunate credulity, she fondly looked, when she should have overcome her husband's unfavourable opinion of her, and won his affections ; and, in indulging such flattering dreams, Emmeline sat some time lost in thought, till roused by the sound of hurried steps in the adjoining room. That room was Lord Fitzhenry's.

The drawing-room opened into a gallery, the first door in which, was that of Emmeline's dressing-room ; her bedroom was beyond ; and beyond that

again, but, having no communication with Emmeline's apartment, was Lord Fitzhenry's; it had been his when a boy; and that now allotted to Emmeline had been his father's.

The sound of measured steps in that room, like those of a person suffering from impatience and anxiety of mind, reminded her that she must answer her husband's letter. But, what could she write? She took her pen, but for long had not power to express a thought. At last, not trusting herself to look a second time at what she had said, she hastily wrote, and folded up a paper, containing the following words.

“ I will not curse, I will not upbraid you ; yet I have been most cruelly used

and deceived. Your wishes shall be laws to me. You need apprehend no childish weaknesses or complaints on my part. In time, you will learn better to know her whom you have made your wife. And to God alone shall I apply for relief or assistance under any trial that may assail me.

“EMMELINE.”

She opened the door into the gallery—all was silent. With hurried, trembling steps, she went into the drawing-room, placed her letter on a conspicuous part of the table, involuntarily looked round the room, as if to recall some of those gay, bright anticipations with which she had that day first entered it; and then, with noiseless steps, regained

her own apartment. As she went to it, she saw light beneath the door of Lord Fitzhenry's room. Satisfied that he was still up, and that he would look for her letter, she closed her door, and sat breathless, with flushed cheeks, to hear him pass into the drawing-room for it. In a little while, she heard him tread softly along the gallery. At the door of her room he paused—then went hastily on. On his return, he again paused.

“He listens,” thought Emmeline, “to hear if all is quiet, and whether the insensible fool whom he has made his wife sleeps soundly ;”—and tears of mortification again made their way down her face ; again the door of her husband's room closed, and all was quiet.

The dawn of day found poor Emme-

line in the same listening attitude in which she had sat when Fitzhenry passed her room—her hands clasped together, her eyes fixed on vacancy. She was roused by the extinguishing candle falling into its socket, and looked up astonished to see broad day light. She went to the window to throw open the sash, that the fresh air might cool her eyes and cheeks : in drawing up the blind for the purpose, the string caught the rings on her finger. She started on seeing her wedding ring, and, above it, the circles of diamonds, rubies, &c., the presents of doating parents, and perhaps envious friends, on the morning of that ceremony, which was, they imagined, to secure her future happiness. “ Alas ! ” thought she, “ how they were mistaken ! ”

Emmeline soon felt chilled by the fresh morning air. She hastily bound up her loose locks, laid herself on her bed, and the fatigue of her mind, (a feeling so new to her,) procured for her the rest she needed.

She awoke with that confused impression of distress, which the unhappy know so well; which oppresses the mind even before we can clearly remember what occasions it. Still she was refreshed by those few hours of sleep, and felt better able to encounter the dreaded meeting with her husband than she could have thought possible.

She got up and rang for her maid. From her window, she had seen Fitzhenry out before the house, and she hurried herself to be in the breakfast-room before his return. While she was

dressing, she schooled herself in the part she was to act, and resolved to meet him with the unembarrassed kindness of friendship. Had she had to expect him *one* minute longer, her nerves would have failed her; but she saw him hurry towards the house. The servants had fortunately left the room. She heard his footsteps on the stairs, the door opened, and in he came. He was deadly pale; Emmeline went up to him, —held out her hand. Hardly knowing what she said, she made some remark on the weather, the heat, and, without pausing, in a hurried voice, asked him some other indifferent questions.

. Fitzhenry returned the pressure of her hand, once looked in her face, apparently with surprise; tried to speak,

and at last, in time, overcame his agitation; but never again did his eyes meet hers, or were they even ever raised towards her. He had brought into the room with him some greyhounds, apparently as subjects for conversation. They fawned and jumped on their master; and the noise and bustle they made—the feeding them, and Emmeline's endeavours to ingratiate herself in their favour, was a something to do, and a relief.

During that melancholy breakfast, of which neither eat, Emmeline was the one who played her part the best. When it was gone, Fitzhenry said, “I have some letters I must write”—and, struck with the possible interpretation of his own words, he coloured deeply; “but

they will soon be written," he added hastily, "and probably you too will wish to write to tell your mother of your safe arrival; and,"—again embarrassed, he stopped short. However, in a minute, he recovered himself, and said, "The post leaves at one; after that, if the day continues fine, you will perhaps like to go out and see the place. I don't know what sort of a horsewoman you may be, but I have a very docile animal, if you will venture to mount him."

Emmeline, who had ridden much, and thought that that species of exercise, with a groom attending, would, under their awkward circumstances, be better than a *tête-à-tête* walk, directly said she had no fears, and would prefer riding.

Thus they parted; and Emmeline went

to her own room to write to her parents. It was then that the melancholy of her prospects overcame her with a bitterness she had not before experienced.

She had taken her pen in her hand—placed the blank paper before her; but the moment she was going to address her mother, an involuntary burst of tears escaped from her, and she laid her head down on the table, unable to write; for, alas! what could she write to that doating mother? what feelings express, but those of mortification, and the anticipation, the conviction, indeed, of certain future unhappiness to them as well as to herself? Perhaps equally, if not more poignant, would be the feelings of many women, were they but a few years after their fate in life is thus fixed, to re-peruse

the letters written during the early period of their marriage, breathing nothing but the belief of continued felicity and of unalterable love. But no such even transient dream of bliss existed to poor Emmeline. Again she took her pen, wiped away the tears that had blotted her paper, and, as well as she could, made out a letter to satisfy her mother's anxious heart.

There was no lover at her side, fondly to follow each motion of her hand, each thought that her pen traced, and with the playfulness of overflowing love and happiness, to guide that hand when, for the first time, signing his name as her own.

When the hour fixed on for their ride arrived, Emmeline went to the appoint-

ment with as cheerful a countenance as she could command. Fitzhenry left it to the groom to put her on her horse, and never looked at her when mounted; but, otherwise, was careful of her safety; and this cold neglect on his part she at the minute rejoiced at, as she had feared he must have observed the trace of her tears. The fresh air and a new and agreeable country revived her spirits, by nature at all times inclined to cheerfulness. The awkwardness and mental absence of her companion also a little wore off, and, on the whole, they got through the morning better than she had expected.

Fitzhenry told Emmeline that his father was coming to them the Wednesday following, and that he had invited some

friends for the end of the week. She rejoiced to hear of these arrangements; not but that her feelings towards that father had much changed since the truth had begun to break in upon her; but then, any third person would be such a relief!

When she thought of the way in which their honeymoon was to be passed—that after hurrying away from town and the world with all accustomed bustle—and, although only married four and twenty hours, they both already looked to society for relief, the absurdity of their situation struck her for an instant as so ridiculous, that involuntarily a smile, which she saw did not escape her companion, stole over her features; but, as it faded, a deep-drawn sigh succeeded,

and she averted her head, to conceal from Fitzhenry, the revolution of feeling which she was conscious was painted in her face. A long train of reflections passed through her mind, as, absorbed in thought, she carelessly with her whip brushed from the bushes, as she passed them, the drops remaining from a late shower; and so deep was her reverie, (the first almost in which poor Emmeline had ever been lost,) that Lord Fitzhenry twice spoke to her before she heard him, and when she did, the tone of her voice in answer, had in it, (perhaps unknown to herself,) a something of repulsive coldness, unusual to her. Whether it so struck him or not, cannot be ascertained; but the remainder of their ride was performed nearly in total silence.

Emmeline at once wisely took to her own occupations, and allowed her husband to go his own way. It would be often wise and prudent if even new-married *lovers* did the same; for, shocked as they may be at the idea, even real love will at last become dull and wearisome; and many a fondly devoted bride has, I dare say, during the very first week, often wished for her usual occupations, as much as her lover has for his gun and pointers. But with Lord and Lady Fitzhenry, there was no form, no farce of sentiment to keep up. Each felt happier when apart from the other; and, by having many an hour for reflection, Emmeline was enabled to school her mind to the trials to which she felt she must be exposed—trials but too likely to in-

crease ; for gradually her irritated feelings gave way. When Fitzhenry's letter, and its harsh expressions of determined indifference towards her returned to her recollection, then her offended pride enabled her to act her part with spirit ; and she could talk, and even laugh, with apparent gaiety, to show him he had not had power to wound her feelings deeply. For, amiable as was Emmeline's disposition, enough of human infirmity lurked about her—enough of the “ Woman scorned,” to allow her a degree of pleasure in mortifying one, who had shown so little scruple in more than mortifying her.

At moments, too, her natural gaiety was not to be restrained ; and when, on the third evening of their residence at

Arlingford, her laughing eye caught the look of astonishment in the old butler's countenance, when, as he entered the room, he found the supposed lovers occupied with their books at opposite ends of the apartment, apparently as unconscious of each other's presence as any indifferent pair after a dozen years' marriage,—she could not command the inclination to laughter that overcame her.

Lord Fitzhenry looked up astonished.

“ I am much diverted with what I am reading,” said Emmeline, to account for her sudden burst of mirth, (colouring at the same time, with the consciousness of her departure from truth,) although perhaps not sorry of an opportunity of showing him, that even in *his* society, when so totally neglected by him, and after all

he had said and done to depress her spirits, she was still disposed to cheerfulness.

“ May I ask what book you are reading, that I may benefit also by the entertainment,” replied her husband.

“ Perhaps you would not be equally amused by it,” said she. “ Sometimes little things tickle our fancy, without our being able to say why ; and much depends on the humour we are in.”

Lord Fitzhenry looked a little disconcerted, and Emmeline could not be so generous as to regret it.

But in his society, she soon ceased to show either spirit or triumph ; soon forgot to be angry. The mildness of his manners, the charm of his conversation, when sometimes for a little he

seemed to forget their peculiar situation, and to give way to his natural habits and disposition, soon won upon Emmeline, and, with a sigh, she thought, “How she *could* have loved him!” When galloping on before her, and when certain she should not be observed, her eyes were fixed on his manly, graceful figure, and she admired the ease, and indescribable *elegance* (if one may use a word so degraded) of all his actions.

There is something in the manners and conversation of an intelligent man of the world, which it is impossible adequately to describe,—which, without being either information or wit, pleases more than either. It is, perhaps, the art of giving to each subject no more than its due proportion of time and

thought, which prevents conversation from becoming tedious, and hinders any idea, however serious, from weighing too heavily on the mind. Fitzhenry possessed this art in a superlative degree; and Emmeline, to whom such conversation was almost totally new, and who by nature was formed to appreciate every refinement, was powerfully captivated by it. And, added to this, there was a certain foreign gallantry of manner, (that among her father's acquaintance she had certainly never experienced,) and a habit of attention to women, which, in Fitzhenry, was so strong, that his behaviour, even to Emmeline, partook of it—to her, whom he never looked at, nor apparently noticed.

The whole plan of his present life, the

footing upon which he meant Lady Fitzhenry and himself to live together, was, perhaps of foreign growth. A true-bred Englishman would never have behaved with the civility of good breeding to a wife so forced upon him. He could never have thought it possible to have established any one in his house on the terms on which Emmeline was to be placed. But although Lord Fitzhenry looked upon the observance of English customs in a total retirement after marriage as particularly irksome, it never could make him wanting in respect, and even in kindness, to one of Emmeline's sex. His will once made known,—told, as it had been, very plainly and decidedly,—there was nothing more to settle between them, and he behaved to

her with that sort of general observance and attention due from a man to a woman.

In short, he could not help being agreeable, although differing so cruelly from the animated, enthusiastic Fitzhenry, known to his friends.

Perhaps such conduct was more calculated to excite despair than even apparent dislike would have been to one, who, like Emmeline, aimed at winning his love ; but, quick as she was, her inexperience prevented her from being aware, that these attentions of civility were paid by him from mere force of habit ; she therefore gave way to the charm which daily captivated her, and did not always suspect that those words on which her ear delighted to hang, and

which sometimes even wore the semblance of gallantry, were uttered by him generally in total absence of mind, with his thoughts fixed on another.

Who that other was, Emmeline no longer doubted. Something she recollected having heard of Lord Fitzhenry's admiration for Lady Florence Mostyn, when abroad; but he had then been so long out of England, Emmeline's thoughts were little occupied about him, and the intelligence had made but slight impression on her young mind. Now, putting various circumstances together, she could no longer doubt that Lady Florence was her favoured rival, if indeed a rival she could be called, where there was no competition.

For, much as Emmeline might wish

to propitiate her husband, and though even a little vanity and pique might enter into the feeling, yet she had no idea of any of the arts of coquetry, and if she now exerted all her powers of agreeableness, it was from the simple wish to make their present melancholy life pass as well as the awkward circumstances in which they were placed allowed. If she might hope *in time* to *win* her companion's *affections*, she gave up, as perfectly hopeless, all attempts to *captivate* his imagination. And that very feeling made her more at ease, and therefore more agreeable than she could otherwise have been. On all general subjects, Fitzhenry was more than willing to converse. The publications of the day opened a wide field for discus-

sion. It was neutral ground, on which they could meet and parley. There was a peculiar liveliness, and originality in all he said, which Emmeline was not only able to appreciate, but, by taking up his ideas with quickness, to encourage fresh remarks, and even improve upon them. The merits of Sir Walter Scott, Miss Edgeworth, and Southey, were all thoroughly commented upon. Lord Byron came too near home, and, as if by mutual consent, they always avoided him and his writings.

One evening—the last they now had to pass alone—Emmeline had somehow wandered in her conversation to Italy; but she immediately observed a cloud of recollections darken her husband's brow, and, making rather an awkward retreat,

she resumed the book she was reading, and which had given rise to her unlucky remark; and never took her eyes from it till the usual time for retiring to her own room. Fitzhenry had also remained silent; but the moment she moved, he started up as if roused from a reverie, lit her candle for her and wished her good night, hoping the slight headache she had complained of would be better next day. The tone of his voice was so agreeable, the expression of his countenance so mild, that she felt with Juliet,

“ Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I could say good night till it be morrow.”

When she reached her own room, unconscious of what she did, she leant her head on her hand, and stood thus for

some time at the chimney-piece, on which she had placed her candle, lost in thought. Had she been asked what those thoughts were, perhaps she could not have defined them ; but at length, a deep sigh escaped her as she ejaculated to herself “ How pleasant he is ! and if so to me, whom he dislikes, despises, what must he be to her, to whom his whole mind and heart are laid open ? With me it is almost impossible to avoid forbidden subjects—Italy, I see, I must never touch upon. Not only the present but the past belongs to Lady Florence ; *I* am only connected with the future in his mind, and a future to which he looks with dislike and dread.”

The next day was that on which they expected Lord Arlingford ; and Emme-

line, when she met her husband at breakfast, was concerned to see that all those miserable, agitated feelings, which had apparently much subsided, had now returned worse than ever. During that meal, he was so hurried, so abstracted, that when after it was over, he had placed himself at the window to read the newspaper, she ventured to go up to him, and purposely said something about his father's arrival, hoping that she might dispel the anxiety which seemed to oppress him, by showing him how little Lord Arlingford's presence would add to her awkward feelings. She therefore, to open the subject, asked at what time he thought he would arrive.

Fitzhenry, without taking his eyes off the paper, said he did not expect him

till dinner-time—there was a pause, Emmeline not knowing well how again to begin—at length, Fitzhenry himself broke the silence by saying, “ Had you not better write to Mr. and Mrs. Benson, and propose their making us a visit here soon? You will probably be anxious to meet them before long.”

“ Thank you very much,” exclaimed Emmeline, quite moved by the kindness of his proposal, and feeling as if she could have seized with affection on the hand that rested on the edge of the window near her. For a minute, the temptation was strong; her breath came quick, and the blood rushed into her cheeks. But those cruel words in Fitzhenry’s letter, “ my affections can never be yours,” flashed like lightning across her mind,

and prevented her from forgetting herself. Still lost in thought, there she stood. It seemed as if he felt the awkwardness of the moment, and made a motion to go. “Perhaps then you will give me a frank for my father,” she said timidly, and wishing to detain him.

“Certainly, with pleasure;” and he sat down to the table to write it. As he gave it her, his hand trembled. Again Emmeline’s better judgment failed her—again her feelings, unused to concealment, got the better of her prudence. Sorry to observe his excessive perturbation, and wishing as far as she could to alleviate it, while taking the frank from his hand, and without raising her eyes from the writing, she said in a tremulous voice, “Don’t distress yourself—

indeed you may trust me.” Alas! these words had the direct contrary effect from what she had meant and hoped. Fitzhenry started up, and hurried out of the room.

“What have I done!” thought poor Emmeline, as the door closed upon him. “I have forgotten my promise, broken my word—I have displeased him!” and she sank on the chair he had quitted. She hoped he would return; but he did not come. She then thought she would write to him, but, fortunately, nothing which she could express, satisfied her feelings; and, at length, she resolved that she would rather try and make him forget one unguarded word, by never referring to it, and never again so offending.

Sadly she retired to her own sitting-

room, and saw no more of Fitzhenry, till, at their usual hour for riding, a servant came and told her the horses were ready, and that my lord was at the door waiting for her. Emmeline hurried down stairs. She dared not even look at her husband, for the wish to please had begun already to make her timid; but, by the tone of his voice, she soon judged that all *anger* at least, if ever entertained against her, was gone. He even exerted himself more than usual to talk on indifferent subjects.

Lord Arlingford arrived to dinner—Emmeline met him with the cordiality of a daughter. He seemed in high spirits, delighted with her, with the improvements in the house, with every thing. Many a time, did the blood rush into Emmeline's cheek at the allusions he

made to their late marriage, his railleries on the honey moon, and such common hackneyed subjects, which, trifling as they are, generally possess a power of pleasing where happiness really exists, but which to her and Lord Fitzhenry were torture. She turned all this off as well as she could; sometimes almost hating herself for having already become so artful. They thus got to the end of the first day of Lord Arlingford's visit better than she had expected. The father and son had much to look at, much to talk over about the place, plantations, &c. and after the first two days, their party was enlarged by some young men, friends of Fitzhenry.

Emmeline now found her task comparatively easy; she was of course the

object of much attention with all her new guests ; all were anxious to please her, and to court her acquaintance as Lord Fitzhenry's wife ; all, too, seemed surprised at finding Emmeline Benson, the banker's daughter, the agreeable, intelligent, and perfectly well-bred person which, in truth, she was.

At first, timidity made her feel embarrassed in her new situation ; but that soon wore off, and, naturally gay, her spirits rose with the gaiety and lively conversation of those around her. She could not be indifferent to the flattering attentions paid her ; and, to her own surprise, Emmeline soon found herself at her ease, and happy. For Emmeline's heart was as yet comparatively free ; an all-engrossing passion had not *yet* de-

stroyed its happy tranquillity, and a gay, joyous laugh often showed the innocent lightness of that heart. Once, from the other end of the dinner-table, she found Lord Fitzhenry's eyes fixed upon her, but whether it was surprise at the part she was able to take in conversation, or displeasure, perhaps even disgust, at the gaiety which had thus attracted his attention towards her, she knew not. But that look—although his eyes were immediately withdrawn on meeting hers—had power instantly to check her mirth; and her neighbour scarcely recognised in the absent, silent person that now sat beside him, the gay companion, who, a few minutes before, entered so readily into all his ideas.

Emmeline now, nearly for the first

time, heard herself called by her new name. Her husband, too, forced sometimes to designate and address her, called her "Lady Fitzhenry." To hear oneself spoken to by a name so dear, that formerly one hardly dared pronounce it—to be thus reminded, each time, that we are indissolubly bound to that being we adore, is delightful. But in *her* husband's mouth it was to poor Emmeline an insult. It only seemed to cast her further from him, and remind her of the distant footing of mere form on which they lived, on which they were ever to live; for "Emmeline," the name which when a child she had so often heard him pronounce, when she cared not for the endearing intimacy of the appellation, now never passed his lips.

She now saw him but little, and never alone; for he never came into her own sitting-room, and seldom into the drawing-room, except at those hours, when he was certain of finding some of the rest of the party there also. She felt that since they had had society in the house, she had rather lost than gained ground with him, and she now regretted the week they had spent tête-à-tête, much as she had wished it over at the time, as *then* they were *compelled* to have some sort of intercourse together.

Gradually, Emmeline's abstraction increased, and her spirits changed; for, almost unconscious to herself, when in Fitzhenry's society, her thoughts and attention were entirely occupied by him. The most flattering compliments that

gallantry could suggest, had sometimes to be twice repeated to her, and were at last received with a vacant smile; for if she caught the distant tone of Fitzhenry's voice, she heard nothing else; and if, during the day, he had more than usually spoken to her, or paid her some attention of mere civility, her spirits rose even beyond their natural level, and thus gave to her manner at times an appearance of caprice far from her nature.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Unhappy Psyche ! soon the latent wound
The fading roses of her cheek confess,
Her eyes bright beams in swimming sorrows drown’d,
Sparkle no more with life and happiness,
Her parents’ fond exulting heart to bless.”

It was now about six weeks since the fatal day on which Lord and Lady Fitzhenry were married. His feelings towards her, to all appearance, remained the same ; but, with Emmeline, the happiness which depends on insensibility was gone.

Business had hitherto always prevented Mr. and Mrs. Benson from accepting the invitation to Arlingford Hall; but their visit was now fixed to take place as soon as the present company in the house were gone. Emmeline respected her father, and dearly loved her mother; but still she had by nature so nice a tact, that she was soon aware that herself, as well as Lord Fitzhenry, would be better pleased that they should not fall into a set and style of society which they could not suit, and which would not suit them.

Emmeline rather dreaded her mother's visit, dreaded the quick eye of tender affection, and the gossip of servants. "But," thought she, "this visit once over, I have nothing more to dread; all will then go on smoothly—smoothly and

sadly to me," she added. " But I will hope a time may come when he will care for me—already I think he is used to my society; at least, he does not *dislike* it, for I am no longer a constraint to him—I must be patient." And with a deep-drawn sigh, she turned over the leaves of her as yet unopened music-books, and sat down to practise some of her father's favourite songs, which since her marriage she had neglected; for Fitzhenry had never asked her to play or sing, and, unsolicited, she had not had sufficient courage. Since Lord Arlingford had been with them they had dined late, and cards and conversation had filled up the evenings.

At length, the day came on which Mr. and Mrs. Benson were expected. Emmeline's heart beat thick the whole of it,

and her eye was on the road which led to the house, her ear watching for every sound all the morning, although it was impossible they could arrive till late in the day. Fitzhenry sent his horses to meet them at the last stage, watched for their arrival, was at the door of the house to receive them, helped them out of the carriage, and himself conducted them up to Emmeline's room. There, for a few minutes, he left them to fold to their hearts their beloved child. For it was not a scene that he wished to witness, or in which he felt, circumstanced as they were, he had any part to play.

Emmeline's feelings were worked up to the utmost. Joy, fear, a thousand confused ideas conspired to weaken her nerves, and she fell quite overcome into

her mother's arms. It was some time before she could compose herself. But agitation at that moment was so natural, that it seemed to cause no astonishment, nor raise any suspicions.

“My own dear Emmeline!” exclaimed Mrs. Benson, as she kissed her again and again, “how happy I am to see you once more, and to see you, as I trust I do, every way so happy;” and she looked round with complacency on the refined comfort of her room.

Emmeline pressed her mother's hand, she could not speak, and with difficulty forced a smile.

“And how well my lord looks,” said her father: “the last time I saw him, on your wedding-day you know, Emmy—Lady Fitzhenry, I mean; I beg your lady-

ship's pardon," said he, chuckling, while making her a formal bow in order to pass off for wit, what was in fact the real overflowings of his vanity at her newly-acquired rank:—"on that day, the nineteenth of August, eighteen hundred and twenty-three, I did not like his looks at all. I really was afraid he was not well; but I was told it was *natural agitation*. Now I can't for my life conceive why a man is to look red and yellow and melancholy on the happiest day of his life. I dare say I did not when I was married to my good woman there—Eh, Mrs. B.?—However, now a wholesome country life, and true domestic English happiness, you know, my Lady Fitzhenry, seem to have made quite another man of him.

Emmeline tried again to smile.

“ It was so good of him,” continued Mr. Benson, “ to press us so often to come—but it was impossible sooner; business must be attended to—my old saying, you know;—and then the kindness of sending his horses for us, although I dare say there were plenty to be had at the inn; but still your old father liked very much to be brought to Arlingford Hall in a manner in triumph, driven by two postilions in the handsome old Fitzhenry livery, with the coachman on before to show the way, although I suppose the drivers knew it quite well; but it did not signify, I liked all that, egad I did—and I am not ashamed to own it. And then, thought I, a man so full of pretty attentions to his father-in-law, must make a good husband to my dear girl.”

Luckily a kiss of rapture, which he then imprinted on that dear girl's face, saved the necessity of a reply.

By this time, Fitzhenry again made his appearance, apologizing for his absence under the plea of having had some orders to give his coachman.

“No apology, my lord,” said the excellent old citizen, seizing his hand, which he heartily shook; “I consider myself at home here; you and Emmeline are one, you know, and it would be hard indeed if I did not feel at home in my daughter's house.”

Fitzhenry endeavoured to say something in return, but failed, and as a retreat from observation, walked to the window.

“She is a dear, good little girl, this

daughter of mine—is she not, my lord ?” continued Mr. Benson, patting Emmeline’s cheek ; “ and happiness, and your good care of her, have given her such a colour, that I declare I think you must have already taught her to wear rouge, as your fine ladies do.” And Mr. Benson laughed heartily, in gaiety of heart, at his own wit. Alas ! poor Emmeline’s colour was the flushed crimson of nervous agitation. Again Fitzhenry had recourse to looking out of the window at the horses and carriages, which luckily had not yet driven off.

“ Ay, they are beautiful animals,” said Mr. Benson, following him ; “ bred here I believe ; and then they are so well matched. I have been admiring them all the way here. Do you ever drive them

yourself? though *now* I suppose Emmeline has taken the reins into her own hands— Eh, Lady Fitzhenry?”

“This will never do,” thought Emmeline; her heart sank within her, and to put an end to the present trying moment, she proposed showing her mother her room; she trusted that her father’s exuberant spirits would before long vent themselves, and at any rate, separately, both she and Fitzhenry could better bear such attacks. So leaving her father and husband together, she went out of the room with Mrs. Benson. The house—her apartment—the view from the windows—the attentions of the old housekeeper who, in a rustling silk gown, came to make her reverence and offer her services, all delighted the latter.

They had much to talk of, aunts, uncles, cousins to enquire after, and Emmeline's spirits became more composed.

At length, it was time to dress for dinner, and Emmeline retired to her own room. But when there, alone, her head sank on her hand; and a shiver of unhappiness—(I write only to those who have *hearts*, and to all such these sensations are but too well known)—the cold deserted shiver of unhappiness crept over her frame—“ Oh ! mine is a hard fate !” thought she, “ to have eternally a part to act, a secret to conceal, with one, for one, whose heart is for ever closed to me.”

The sight of her father and mother had revived all the affections and associations of Emmeline's early youth; and, disappointed in all her dreams of happiness,

the mad, the desperate thought of confessing her real situation, of leaving Fitzhenry and Arlingford for ever, and returning to her parents, crossed her mind. But a feeling which every day was gaining ground in her heart, almost unknown to herself, made her, the next minute, start with horror at the thought; and, almost terrified at the idea of the irretrievable step which in a moment of hopeless depression she might have been tempted to take, she resolved that she would keep her word with her husband, conceal and bear all, and trust to time and heaven.

Emmeline cooled her burning eyelids, rang for her maid, and dressed for dinner. Fitzhenry was perfect in his manner and attentions to Mr. and Mrs. Benson. He

seemed instinctively to know how to please the former; sent for the oldest wine out of the cellar for him, filled his snuff-box on purpose, bore with his bad jokes, adapted his conversation to him, asking him questions—the replies to which perhaps he never listened to—but which gave the appearance of seeking information from him; and, in the gratitude of her heart for all this kindness, when she ventured to raise her eyes on her husband's handsome, manly countenance, smiling in goodnature on her parents, Emmeline wondered how the idea of leaving him, betraying him, ever could have entered her mind, and she thought that to live with so amiable a being, on any terms, would be happiness.

As soon as the servants had left the dining-room, Mr. Benson filled his glass to a bumper. Emmeline, who observed the smile on his face as he deliberately poured in the wine, dreaded what was coming. “I am an old fashioned old man,” said Mr. Benson, “and I love all old customs, so I must beg leave to propose a toast—My Lord and Lady Fitzhenry,” said he, bowing to them exultingly, “and may they, and may I, see many happy returns of the nineteenth of August.”

Emmeline coloured, and fixed her eyes on the table before her.

“This is the happiest day of my life I believe,” continued Mr. Benson, “not even excepting my own wedding-day; my heart had been so long set on seeing

my Emmy happily settled as your wife; and I must congratulate myself, as well as you, my Lord, at its having at last come to pass. For you too have had it long in your head, or I am much mistaken," added Mr. Benson, nodding significantly to Lord Fitzhenry. "Well do I remember, when Emmy was not above so high, your calling her your little wife, and saying you had a right to kiss her, when you took leave of us, on going abroad. I warrant you have not forgot that any more than myself."

And in the exuberance of his joy, he again held out his hand to his son-in-law. Emmeline dared not look up to see how her husband stood this trial; her heart beat so violently that she felt as if its pulsations must be heard during the

dead silence, which for an instant followed Mr. Benson's speech.

Lord Fitzhenry was the first to break it; and, hastily drinking off his glass, as he bowed in return to Mr. Benson, "You will find this wine very good, I think," said he; "it is some which a friend of mine brought me from Madeira, and has never been in a wine-merchant's hands."

"Yes, indeed, most excellent," replied Mr. Benson, "and I hope by this time next year I may drink some of it, to the health of a little heir to the family."

On poor Emmeline's cheek, a deadly paleness so rapidly succeeded the deep crimson of a minute before, that it caught even Mr. Benson's eye, who, although not quick at observing such dumb indi-

cations of feeling, was sorry to have distressed her, though he hardly guessed how he had done so. His spirits were elevated by the exultation of the moment, and the “excellent wine” beyond his usual hilarity—and even beyond his control.

“Come, come, Emmy,” said he, smiling on her—“I meant no offence; but you know such things often, indeed I may say commonly do happen, as people having little boys and little girls after they are married; and I hope you may have a little boy some of those days, that’s all;” and he winked his eye facetiously at Lord Fitzhenry.

The latter however was, as well as Emmeline, examining the pattern of the China-plate before him; so that poor

Mr. Benson meeting with no encouragement from any one, was forced to change the subject of conversation, and Emmeline soon proposed to her mother to leave the dining-room.

Mrs. Benson took no notice of what had passed ; and Emmeline gradually recovered herself, although, on the gentlemen joining them, she found it impossible to encounter her husband's eyes, and, hastily getting up, she went to the pianoforte. At first, her hand trembled, but a feeling of pride steadied it; and on her father asking for one of his old favourite songs, she complied.

Fitzhenry gradually approached her, and when she had finished singing—
“ That is very beautiful,” said he, “ You

have never before indulged me with any music."

"No!" replied Mr. Benson, "that is a great shame, when I paid I don't know what to a Signor —— what do you call him? for teaching her. She can sing you any of your fine bravuras; but a plain English song, for my money; it is worth all your Italian airs, for there is some sense, some meaning in that, but, as for your foreign nonsense, one can't understand what the words are about; no one can make head or tail of them."

Emmeline could not help smiling; and, looking up, her eyes met Fitzhenry's. He too smiled, and smiled so kindly on her that, for an instant, she fancied there was affection, even fondness in their expression.

“ Perhaps,” said he, “ you will nevertheless indulge me with one of the unmeaning songs Mr. Benson complains of.”

Emmeline sang one of Rossini’s. Fitzhenry sat down by the pianoforte opposite to her, his head leaning on his hand ; and, at first, he looked attentively at her, but when the song was over, he seemed so lost in thought as to have totally forgot the singer. He said nothing ; suffered her to leave the instrument without making any attempt at detaining her, and soon after left the room.

On his return, he proposed a game at whist ; Emmeline had early learnt it to make up her father’s party, so a card-table was rung for. Of course, Mr. and

Mrs. Benson were to play together, and many cruel things were said about not parting husband and wife, &c. But Fitzhenry's behaviour that evening had been to Emmeline (in spite of his disregard of the song he had asked for) an additional draft of love, and she bore all most bravely, for she felt it was for him she was bearing it; she did not venture to observe him while all this was passing, but by the tone of his voice, he seemed to endure these trials with patience and unruffled temper.

Mr. Benson and his wife won every game, for their adversaries knew little of what was going on, trumping and taking each other's tricks with the most perfect mutual indifference. But Mr. Benson only exulted in his superior play,

as chuckling, he put his daughter's money into his pocket, and he retired to bed in high good humour.

The next morning, after breakfast, Fitzhenry took Mr. Benson to show him the farm, stables, &c. and Emmeline and her mother were left together. Mrs. Benson for some time fidgetted about the room, giving dry laconic answers to all Emmeline's observations, which she knew well, was a symptom of her working herself up to say something unusual, and she dreaded what it might be. At length, Mrs. Benson came up to her daughter, and folding her to her heart, as she printed a fond kiss on her forehead——
“ Well, my dear child,” she said, “ I trust I see you as happy as heart—as even my foolish heart can wish ?”

“How can you doubt it?” answered Emmeline, greatly embarrassed by so direct a question. “You see how kind, how excellent he is”—and to avoid her mother’s anxious gaze, she stooped down to caress an old poodle of Fitzhenry’s that had lately established himself in her room. “Speak, Tiber,” said she to the dog—“Have we not a most kind master?”

There was a pause, but Mrs. Benson returned to the charge.

“I find you live quite *fashionably*, in separate apartments. I must say I think that is a silly new fangled refinement which I don’t approve of at all, and I hope it is no fancy of yours?”

Emmeline coloured deeply.—“Lord Fitzhenry,” she replied, “had so long

lived abroad, was so used to foreign customs, that she did not wonder he liked to adopt them at home."

"But, Lord Fitzhenry was not a married man abroad, I presume?" said Mrs. Benson, forcing a laugh.

Emmeline forced one too, but her lip quivered, tears came into her eyes, and again she was obliged to stoop and coax the dog.

"By the bye, Emmeline," said Mrs. Benson, after a moment's silence, "I have brought you your work-box which you left in Harley-street; I wonder you did not miss it, for I suppose you have a good deal of time to yourself now, and are more alone than you used to be with us?"

"All women must be a good deal

alone when they leave home," replied Emmeline, with as steady a voice as she could command,—“ for the occupations and amusements of men are so different, particularly in the country.”

“ Then you *are* chiefly by yourself,” said Mrs. Benson, hastily, as if catching at the confession, as something she was seeking for.

“ Oh dear no, I go out riding with some of the gentlemen nearly every day.”

“ Oh, you do, do you ?” said Mrs. Benson ; “ and Lord Fitzhenry, does he go too ?”

“ Yes, generally.”

“ I thought he had not,” said Mrs. Benson rather vacantly, and appearing to be engaged in some ruminations of her own.

Emmeline took advantage of the momentary pause that followed, to start a new subject of conversation. She trusted, that when her mother saw how perfectly good humoured and indulgent Lord Fitzhenry was to her ; in all things allowing her to be her own mistress, as well as mistress of his house, that the doubts and suspicions which she saw had been raised in her mind, either by her own observations, or her maid's gossiping reports, would subside. For, as Emmeline suspected, this conversation had, in fact, been brought on by some stories which Mrs. Benson had already heard. Her maid and Emmeline's were old acquaintance ; and what maid or mistress can help talking over her neighbour's affairs ? The truth was, that Mrs.

Brown, the old housekeeper, and Susan, Emmeline's maid, (now promoted to Mrs. Jenkins,) had already quarrelled; for the latter soon began to throw out hints, which Mrs. Brown, thinking herself bound to stand up for her master, resented violently; so that by the time Mrs. Benson arrived, Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Brown were open enemies; and the former lost no time in securing on her side her old companion Warren—Mrs. Benson's maid.

As soon, therefore, as they had swallowed their tea, at which solemn and important ceremony Mrs. Brown had presided in all the pomp of housekeeper civility, the two friends retired; and while Mrs. Benson's clothes were ar-

ranged in the drawers by the maid, Jenkins, with many a sigh over poor Miss Emmeline, and many an exaggeration, gave an account of the *dreadful* way in which Lord and Lady Fitzhenry lived together, and of my Lord's shameful neglect of her. "In short," she ended with saying, "things are come to such a pitch, that Mrs. Brown and I are scarce on speaking terms, and I am, as you see, very distant even with Mr. Reynolds. People must see what they does see, except those people who wo'nt see, and I am quite resolved on one thing—which is, to be as uppish as possible both with Mrs. Brown and Mr. Reynolds till I see my lord behave better to my lady. I am but a servant, certainly ; but I can't for all that, help

thinking it a very strange thing the way they go on."

"And what does Mrs. Brown say to this?" enquired her auditor.

"Oh she says, forsooth, that it is all my vulgar notions, and because I have not been used to quality."

"Quality, indeed!" echoed her friend. "Fine airs, upon my word. Miss Emmeline was as good as Lord Fitzhenry any day in the year, I am sure. I should like to know who had the most money, and the best of the bargain? Poor thing! she is much changed; and when she said to me, 'How do you do, Warren?' I could plainly see that all was not right between her and Lord Fitzhenry. You know *I* was always against the match."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Brown, who came to enquire whether any thing was wanted in the rooms.

“ Nothing ma’am, thank you,” said Warren dryly, endeavouring to throw into her manner that dignity which Jenkins said she was determined to keep up till Lord Fitzhenry was a better husband, and which Warren, as her sworn ally, thought it right to adopt also. And then pretending to be busily occupied, she took no notice of Mrs. Brown. Warren’s behaviour was so different from what it had been when they had parted at the tea table, that the consequential housekeeper guessed directly to whose influence the change was owing. She said nothing; but settling the shawl that

was pinned on her shoulders, and casting an angry glance at Jenkins, she bustled out of the room, saying, she would send the *housemaid* to attend upon them; and resolving to be revenged on the two friends.

“ You have affronted Mrs. Brown finely,” said Jenkins, as soon as she had, with somewhat of a jirk, closed the door after her; “ but I am glad of it, for really that is the only way to mend matters, and I feel it my duty to my lady, to quarrel in a manner with Mrs. Brown, though, as far as I am myself concerned, I am, as you know, the most good naturedest of people, and willing to live in peace and harmony with every one.”

“ That you are,” replied Mrs. War-

ren ; for, at that moment, she thought it good policy to forget, as well as Mrs Jenkins did, the many regular pitched battles they had fought, when the latter was simple Susan, and nominally under Warren's controul.

The result of this conversation was a mysterious and sorrowful expression on Warren's countenance when she attended her lady, Mrs. Benson, at bed-time ; and a significantly melancholy tone of voice when she said, " I hope you find Lady Fitzhenry pretty well, ma'am ? "

" Quite well," said Mrs. Benson. " She has not been ill that I know of. Susan does not say she has been unwell, does she ? "

" Oh no ; Mrs. Jenkins says her lady-

ship's health is wonderfully good, considering," replied Warren.

"Considering *what*? said Mrs. Benson, turning quickly round, and looking her in the face, "What do you mean by *considering*?"

"*I* mean? dear me, how should *I* mean any thing?"

"Why, you speak as if you *did* mean something; and I desire if you know any thing about Emmeline's health, that you will tell me."

"La, ma'am! there is nothing the matter with Miss Emmeline as I know of, only I thought perhaps she might not be so lively-like as she used to be, living so much alone."

"What do you mean by alone? I suppose Lord and Lady Fitzhenry are

as much together as other married people are? I don't expect he sits all day at home with her, any more than Mr. Benson does with me."

"I believe you will find it is very different from you and my master," said Warren, with a significant sigh.

"What *can* you mean by all this?" said Mrs. Benson, alarmed.

"Why, I mean, ma'am, that Miss Emmeline, (Lady Fitzhenry, that is to say,) is always alone."

"Always alone?" repeated Mrs. Benson; "really Warren I don't know what you would be at—and I don't believe *you* know yourself."

"Yes, ma'am," said Warren, bridling up; "and I only say what I know to be true. Lord Fitzhenry sleeps in his own

room alone all night, and Lady Fitzhenry sits in her room alone all day ; and, if that is living like a married pair, I don't know what a married pair is."

" Who tells you all this nonsense ? " said Mrs. Benson, angrily, and yet wishing to hear more.

" Why, Mrs. Jenkins, to be sure, ma'am. She says, that my lord quarrelled with my lady on their very wedding-day—for that she herself heard high words between them and doors shut in a passion-like—and ever since that terrible scene—which Jenkins can swear to—they have continued to live in this strange way. For my part, I don't think if I was Mrs. Jenkins I would remain in so unpleasant a family, although to be sure all is in very high style, and

the housekeeper's room as good as many ladies' drawing-rooms, with a nice Turkey carpet; but still all can't be right. However, I should be sorry to tell tales and make mischief; but you know, ma'am, you forced me to speak, otherwise I am sure I should have held my tongue about it all to my dying day, for I am sure I would not for all the world make you uneasy, ma'am."

"Well, I desire you will hold your tongue to every body else," said Mrs. Benson gravely, "and bid Susan come to me to-morrow morning."

Susan told her story, heightening the picture as much as she could; and, after all this, it will not be wondered at that Mrs. Benson endeavoured to discover the truth from Emmeline. Her answers,

her praises of Fitzhenry, staggered her ; and, as Emmeline had anticipated, the appearance of perfect good humour on the part of her husband, often even of gallant attention towards her, made Mrs. Benson think the whole was no more than the common gossip of servants ; and, at any rate, she had too much good sense to endeavour to pry into matrimonial secrets and arrangements, which her daughter did not seem to wish to have noticed ; so, resolving to be very watchful, she said no more.

A day or two after, several of the neighbours, who had been invited, came to Arlingford. Mr. and Mrs. Benson were of course delighted on seeing the deference and court paid to their daughter ; and the bustle occasioned by the vi-

sitors, the driving about in the morning, viewing the country, and returning visits, occupied Mrs. Benson's time, if not her thoughts, so entirely, that she and Emmeline being seldom alone together, the latter was spared any more distressing conversations.

At the end of about a week, Mr. Benson received letters which obliged him to return immediately to town on some mercantile business. "But," said he, casting a doubtful, enquiring look on Lord Fitzhenry, "I need not carry off my good lady wife, if you will give her house-room a little longer, and I can perhaps return for her; or, at any rate, I think I may by this time trust her to travel alone, whatever other husbands may"—winking his eye at Emmeline.

Lord Fitzhenry directly expressed great pleasure in Mrs. Benson prolonging her visit, and then, after a moment's pause, added, "Indeed it will be particularly kind to Lady Fitzhenry if she will, for I myself shall be obliged to leave home in a day or two."

Emmeline gave a start, and involuntarily looked up towards her husband. For an instant their eyes met; but, as if by mutual consent, both were instantly withdrawn. "He catches at the first opportunity to leave me," thought she. "Glad his penance is over."

Whither he was going, Fitzhenry never said, and Emmeline dared not ask; indeed, she hardly knew whether, during his absence, he would expect her to write to him; and therefore, if even under that pretext she could venture to enquire.

On the day settled for his departure, when the carriage was ready at the door, he came into the drawing-room to take leave. Mrs. Benson was there with Emmeline.

“ If there come any letters for me,” said he, “ I have desired Reynolds to send them to the house in town, and I shall leave word there to have them forwarded.” Still he said nothing about her writing to him. He staid some time in the room, seemingly uncertain what to do or say, or how to take leave of her. At length, apparently summoning courage for a disagreeable effort, he walked hastily up to Mrs. Benson, shook hands with her, came up to Emmeline and did the same, adding, in rather a low voice, “ I shall be glad

to hear from you ;” and, not waiting for any answer, he hurried out of the room.

It was the first time their hands had ever met since that morning after their marriage, when she had herself offered hers to Fitzhenry in token of forgiveness and goodwill. Since then, now nearly two months, her sentiments towards him had taken a totally different character ; her face blushed crimson ; but he, whose slightest touch had thus thrilled to her heart, and had power to raise that blush, almost before the “ eloquent blood ” had reached her cheek, was already gone.

From the window she sadly saw him drive off ; whither and to whom he was going, she could not doubt.

Several days passed, and she heard nothing from him; at last, a letter, franked Fitzhenry, was put into her hands; she opened it hastily—her heart beating with emotion—but it merely enclosed a printed one from some tradesperson in London, applying for her custom. In a fit of vexation, almost of anger, she was nearly throwing the whole into the fire, when some writing on one of the flaps of the cover caught her attention, and she found these words.

“The longer Mrs. Benson can stay with you the better; I believe I shall not be home for a fortnight. Should she not be able to remain, perhaps you had better go and pay your father a visit; and I will let you know when I am

likely to be at Arlingford again; but now, and always, do whatever you yourself like best. I hope soon to hear you are well.

“ Yours,

“ FITZHENRY.”

“ So you have got a letter from your husband,” said Mrs. Benson; “ and a fine thick packet. I hope he is well? ”

“ Quite well,” said Emmeline, sadly.

“ What news does he give? what has he been about? ”

“ News? ” repeated Emmeline, absently—

“ Yes; I mean—what does he say? ”

“ Say? oh, nothing.”

“ What! nothing in all that quantity of paper and writing? Lord, child!

you are quite in a dream"—and Mrs. Benson took off her spectacles, and her eyes from the newspaper she was reading, and fixed them attentively on her daughter. This roused her from her reverie, and suddenly recollecting herself, she said, "Oh yes, I forget; he says, he can't come home yet, and we had better go to Charlton to my father till his return."

"Well, I think that will be a very good plan," said Mrs. Benson: "some business, I suppose, detains him."

"I suppose so," echoed Emmeline.

Mrs. Benson still kept her eyes fixed on Emmeline, and both remained for some time in silence and abstraction. Again all her former doubts and suspicions returned to her mind; and when

she looked on her absent, dejected daughter, who still sat gazing on the letter in her hand, she almost resolved to speak to her, and force herself into her confidence. But though with little of the outward refinement of the world, Mrs. Benson had great delicacy of feeling, as well as excellent sense : she felt that when she was not called upon to give advice, or to reprehend what was wrong, she had no business to interfere between her daughter and her husband ; and indeed, here, what could she say ? Emmeline was certainly changed ; she was no longer the gay, light-hearted being she used to be, but *apparently* her husband behaved perfectly well to her ; at least nothing had ever passed, that Mrs. Benson could have named as a proof of unkindness ; and

as for Emmeline, she was to him gentleness—acquiescence itself ; but still, Mrs. Benson could not help feeling that all was not right, although she could not perhaps have given any positive reason for her suspicions. How she longed to bid her confide to her every feeling, every care of her heart, as in days of yore, when she hushed her young sorrows to rest on her bosom, and kissed away her childish tears ! But when a mother resigns her darling child to him who is to be the arbiter of her future destiny, she loses, in a great measure, that dear prerogative of affection. Mrs. Benson, feeling this, wisely forbore ; and the next day, without any thing more passing between them on the subject, they set off together for

Charlton, where Mr. Benson had, since Lady Fitzhenry's marriage, chiefly resided.

When there, Emmeline wrote to her husband. There is something so private, so sacred, in a letter—we can, in writing, express so much, which, either from shyness, or emotion, we cannot bring ourselves to say by word of mouth, that Emmeline longed to give way to her inclinations, and pour out on the paper her feelings towards him; but she felt that the utterance of one word which could in any way be interpreted into an allusion to her painful situation, would be breaking her agreement; and she merely told him of her journey and her safe arrival; glad of having even such uninteresting subjects to treat of, and

that to Fitzhenry! to whom she *could* have written volumes!

In about ten days she got an answer; it had no date: (his letters to her never had beyond the post town on the frank.) In it, he named the day for his return to Arlingford. Two days previous to it, notwithstanding Mrs. Benson's remonstrances, and her father's railleries, Emmeline would return home. "He might possibly arrive," she thought to herself; "something might bring him back before the day he had fixed upon, and she was resolved on departure."

But, exactly the contrary happened from what she had anticipated; that day passed in anxious but vain expectation; and the next—and the next. At length, on the fourth, Reynolds, with a counte-

nance expressive of the share he had taken in the disappointment, put a letter into her hand, with the well-known, well-beloved signature of Fitzhenry. And it did not, this time, merely enclose a printed petition, but was from himself. He said in it, that the unexpected arrival of his friend Mr. Pelham, (the minister at Vienna,) had detained him in town, as he had waited till he could accompany him to Arlingford, which he now hoped he should be able to do in a couple of days. Mr. Moore, his former travelling companion, would also come with him, and they would soon be followed by his cousin, Lady Saville, her husband, and sister. Emmeline had just seen Lady Saville, when she had paid a visit of form to the Benson family,

on the match being declared ; and on the wedding-day she was present at the ceremony.

CHAPTER V.

As t'other day my hand he seized,
My blood with thrilling motion flew :
Trembling all o'er, like one ill pleased,
Perhaps I from his hold withdrew.
T'was fear alone—he read me wrong—
Had he retained my hand, ere long
He had felt its pressure too.

GAY.

Two tedious solitary days were still to be passed before Emmeline expected Fitzhenry at Arlingford. Being secure, that she had the house all to herself she felt a strong inclination to go into his room, which she had never yet en-

tered. It would be, she thought, the next best thing to seeing himself. Treading softly, as if fearful he might hear her, she put her hand on the lock—looked round to see if she was observed, and then hastily turned it. The door was locked.

The noise she made brought a housemaid out of an adjoining room.—“The door is locked my lady: when my lord went away, he desired the housekeeper to keep the key, but I will step to Mrs. Brown and fetch it, if your ladyship wants any thing.”

“Oh no, it is of no consequence,” said Emmeline, colouring deeply, as if detected in some crime.

Emmeline was the most single-hearted of beings. She had not sufficient pre-

sence of mind to think of any excuse for wishing to go into her husband's room; and with a feeling of awkwardness, almost of shame, she returned to her own. Disappointed, and dispirited, she knew not what to turn to; and for the first time in her life, felt it impossible to occupy herself; the day appeared endless, and her time, an insupportable weight. As she wandered about her own room, her eyes fell on a petition she had had from a poor man residing on the estate, whose house and mill had been nearly destroyed by fire. He lived a few miles off, and Emmeline determined to enquire of Reynolds about him, and, glad to have found an object, to ride to his abode in order to see what could be done for the family—rather ashamed of herself for having allowed her mind

to be so entirely engrossed by one subject, that she had totally forgotten this petition which she had received while at Charlton.

Emmeline went into the dining-room and summoned Reynolds. In this room hung a picture of Fitzhenry, painted at the time of his leaving school, when a boy about sixteen. It was much less handsome than he now was; his character was not then, as now, marked on his countenance, giving it that look of manly openness, and yet of feeling, for which it was so remarkable; but, (as the eyes looking out of the picture seemed to smile on the beholder,) it was so agreeable to Emmeline to gaze on it, that, lost in thought, she forgot entirely what brought her there. How long she had remained, she knew not, but on turning

round she saw Reynolds in the room quietly waiting her orders.

“ Did you ring, my lady,” said the old man, with a benevolent smile.

“ Oh yes,” said Emmeline, rather embarrassed. “ But at this moment I have forgotten——.”

“ Ah, many a time have I forgot myself looking at that picture,” answered Reynolds. “ It was considered an excellent likeness when it was done ; it was just when we left Eton.”

“ Why, were you there with Lord Fitzhenry ?”

“ Oh yes!” my lady, I have been with my Lord ever since he was seven years old ; Lord Arlingford did not like to have nursery-maids about him, so I had entire charge of him—went with

him to school, to Oxford, and then abroad; so no wonder I love him, I may say as my son. I hope no offence," added he, tears starting into his eyes.

"What, you were abroad with him?" said Emmeline, hastily catching at the word; *why* she did not know, except that it seemed always as if that word contained the history of her husband's life and affections.

"Yes, my lady, I was in Italy and at Vienna with him. I was three years abroad, and then, when he returned again to Italy (he paused)—I felt I was too old to begin again; I thought some younger servant would suit my lord better, and I begged leave to come home; and though certainly it was not my place, yet I tried hard to

persuade my lord to come home too; for I own I thought little good would come of living so much out of one's own country—people get a love for rambling, never can settle, and learn bad foreign ways——.”

And again he stopped short, as if he feared he might already have said too much. Emmeline longed to hear more, and yet she also thought perhaps she had allowed him to go too far; and making no comment on what he had said, she hastily ejaculated—“ Oh! I remember now what I rung for. I want to know where that man of the name of Rawlins now lives, who wrote me this petition, and if you know any thing about him, and what can be done for him.”

“ Rawlins whose mill was burnt?

Oh yes! my lady, I know him very well, but all that is settled. My lord, to whom he also applied, wrote to me to find him employment, and to give him and his family, for the present, a cottage that chanced to be vacant, and he also desired me to give the wife some allowance weekly till they had a little recovered themselves, and till he could see what more could be done for them, for they are honest industrious people, and my lord is so good. I have his letter somewhere about me, if your ladyship would like to see it," added Reynolds, searching in a large pocket-book, in which among heaps of bills and papers he at last found it, and gave it to Emmeline.

Her heart overflowed towards her

husband. “How good! how kind he is! thought she, and she almost added, “kind to every one but me.”

The letter said nothing more than what Reynolds had repeated; but still, even to see his hand-writing was agreeable. She was just going to return it to him, when on the other side of the page, a postscript and her own name caught her eye, and with a beating heart, she continued:—

“I hope you have attended to those alterations in the greenhouse which Lady Fitzhenry wished to have made—and desire the groom to exercise her horse properly for her before her return, for when I last rode him he was much too spirited.”

Emmeline read and re-read these few words expressive of care and thought

for her, till she exaggerated their meaning far beyond their original import, and on them built many a visionary castle of future happiness. She mounted her horse, and many an additional caress and kind word she addressed to the animal, now that it was connected in her mind with Fitzhenry, and with the first expression of interest about herself that had ever escaped him. She found the Rawlins family overflowing with gratitude, and offering up prayers for her husband, in which it cannot be doubted she most heartily joined.

Buoyed up by all these exhilarating feelings, she had almost forgotten her real situation, and the terms on which she and this beloved Fitzhenry lived; and in these flattering dreams, the two intervening days quickly passed, and that on

which she was to expect him at last arrived. The whole of the morning was spent in restless anticipations of happiness, picturing to herself their meeting, fancying what he would say to her, how he would look at her, till she actually heard his carriage drive up to the door. With a beating heart she flew to the window, and her delighted eye caught the first glance of the face she loved.

His two friends were with him, and all three entered the room together. Emmeline was so overjoyed at seeing him again after a month's separation—(a century in love's calculation of time,) that fearful of expressing too much, she remained as if spell-bound in her place. Fitzhenry came up to her, but his manner was, if possible, more cold, more

embarrassed than ever. How unlike the meeting that she had indulged herself in acting over and over in her own mind ! He introduced his two companions to her. Mr. Pelham had one of those calm but expressive countenances which directly obtains our interest ; and when he held out his hand to Emmeline, claiming the friendship of his friend's wife, the interest seemed reciprocal. Indeed, his look of anxious curiosity when presented to her, would have been embarrassing, had not his manner been marked with a peculiar appearance of kindness.

Very different was the impression made on Emmeline by Mr. Moore. Although he looked clever and lively, she shrunk at once from him ; the glance of

his eye had something penetrating and satirical which she dreaded. With a pure guileless heart, and an unreprieving conscience, poor Emmeline could not help fearing a quick observer of feelings in all the little daily occurrences of life.

The rest of the party that Fitzhenry had announced followed the day after. Lady Saville was what might be called agreeable in society, although more from possessing the polish and easy manner of the world, than from any decided talents or accomplishments. At first, she and her sister had, with the true impertinence of fine ladies, settled between them, that Emmeline could only be fit to laugh at ; and they anticipated no little amusement in quizzing the

banker's daughter. But when they found her, as even they were themselves obliged to allow, quite on a par with themselves, perfect in manners, and in fact possessing the outward good breeding of the world, although free from that falsehood and selfishness which so often destroys its charm, they changed their tone, and resolved they would patronize her, declaring, "she was quite a person to be brought forward." And they soon, found real pleasure in her society and conversation.

Some of the county neighbours, with whom Lady Saville was previously acquainted, joined the party, and the house was quite full. This, Emmeline plainly saw was now Fitzhenry's plan of

life when forced to be at Arlingford; and she was compelled with a sigh to own it was the best for them both; for in so numerous a society of course they were necessarily apart, and any coldness was little remarked. She could not help being aware that the distance between them, and the awkwardness of their manner, had rather encreased than worn off. And could it be otherwise? Two people no way connected can live under the same roof mutually cold and careless, and still be perfectly good friends, for the one would think so little about the other, that, when thrown together by chance, their manners would wear the ease of indifference. But between Fitzhenry and Emmeline, this was impossible. Both entirely en-

grossed by one feeling, which was to be concealed from the other, they had no *point de reunion*, no neutral ground on which to meet; and the more poor Emmeline's affections became engaged, the more—and she felt conscious of it herself—the more timid and cold her manner grew towards her husband, and that of course reacted on Fitzhenry's. He evidently too was now much out of spirits, and looked ill. Mr. Moore's gaiety seemed too much for him; he rallied him too much on his gravity, and on his lately acquired married importance, as he called it, appearing to Emmeline purposely to take pleasure in tormenting him.

Mr. Pelham seemed the friend he preferred, and yet, after their being long

together, Fitzhenry always appeared more than usually abstracted and dejected. Mr. Pelham too was the person who seemed to pay the most attention, and to take the greatest interest in herself. She fancied, indeed, that he watched them both; but it was always with such a kind, compassionate, benignant look, that she did not, as with Mr. Moore, shrink from his scrutiny.

The winter was now far advanced; hunting and shooting kept the gentlemen almost entirely out of doors, and Emmeline and her female companions were generally all the morning left to themselves. One rainy day, on which it was impossible for them to leave the house, and when Lady Saville had run through or yawned over every novel and review

in the drawing-room, she proposed, for the sake of exercise, to go all over the house. “ I have never yet even been admitted into your sanctum sanctorum, Lady Fitzhenry, pray let me go.”

“ Oh ! pray do,” echoed a young lady, starting up from a table at which she had been seated the whole morning, with most laudable industry engaged in working a purse, and endeavouring to make a hearts-ease out of invisible blue and yellow beads. “ Do let us go ; it will get us through this dull morning so nicely ; and really without Mr. Moore and the battledoor and shuttlecock, one don’t know what to do with oneself.”

Emmeline, always wishing to be obliging, led the way to her apartment.

“ How comfortable ! how pretty !” all

exclaimed. “ Did you fit up this room yourself?” enquired Lady Saville. Emmeline answered, that she found it as it was when she first came to Arlingford. “ What a delightful, gallant husband!” said Lady Saville. “ Now that was his foreign education; all men should be sent abroad before they marry, to be properly drilled; it improves them wonderfully.” Poor Emmeline could not quite assent to this observation.

“ Oh! dear, dear Lady Fitzhenry!” said the purse-making young lady, (by name Miss Selina Danvers,) flying up to her and seizing her hand with ecstatic fondness, “ I have the greatest possible favour to ask of you; pray, pray grant it—it is to let me see your wedding-dress; I shall be more obliged to you than I can express.”

“There is nothing remarkable to see,” said Emmeline, coldly, not feeling the smallest wish to behold, or have discussed, what brought back so painfully to her mind the day on which she wore it.

“That is really being very modest,” said Lady Saville, “for it was beautiful, and, moreover, you looked remarkably pretty in it; and I own I was rather provoked at my worthy cousin Fitzhenry’s excessive stupidity or bashfulness, for I don’t think he ever looked at you. I never saw a man appear so completely stupified, and put out as he was at his marriage; and when I wished him joy, he stared, and looked as silly and sheepish as possible. Love certainly had upon him the direct contrary effect from what it had on Cymon.”

“ Dear, how odd !” exclaimed Miss Danvers . “ But who is Mr. Cymon, and what did it do to him ? Now don’t laugh at me so, one can’t know every body ; and I don’t go every year to London as you do.”

This new scent about Cymon, however, could not put the wedding finery out of Selina’s head, and she teased poor Emmeline till she obtained from her a reluctant consent that her maid and the gown should be rung for ; and soon the whole paraphernalia was exhibited with pride and pomp by Mrs. Jenkins.

Miss Selina went into ecstasies at each separate flower and flounce, and putting the veil over her head, she flew to the glass to look at herself. “ What a beauty it is !” she exclaimed. “ Dear, how I

should like to be married! one looks so interesting in a lace gown and veil. Lady Fitzhenry, were you very much frightened at the ceremony? did you cry? For my part, I don't think I should be able to keep my countenance for laughing."

"At what?" demanded Lady Saville.

"Oh! I don't know at what, in particular; but I think it would be so odd for me to be married."

"Why should it be more odd to you than any one else?" rejoined Lady Saville.

"Oh! I can't tell, only because I think it would be so droll—but I should like it of all things—and then the new chaise-and-four, and the favours, and driving off in such a bustle, and all the people in the street staring at one; and one's

wedding-ring, and one's new name; it would all be so charming. If I was you, Lady Fitzhenry, I think I should have rung the bell the minute I was married, to have had the pleasure of hearing the servant say, 'Yes, *my Lady*.' Oh! I have another great favour to ask," continued Miss Selina, who had by this time satisfied her curiosity about the gown and veil; "do let me see your picture of Lord Fitzhenry."

Emmeline assured her she had none to show her.

"No? Dear, how odd! I thought when people were married, they had always their picture painted in miniature as a thing of course, and I had even settled beforehand how *ours* should be done—I all in clouds and thin drapery by Mrs. Mee, you know, and he in armour."

“ And who is the *he* whose costume you have already fixed upon ?” enquired Lady Saville.

“ Oh ! I don’t know ; whoever I may chance to marry. But, Lady Fitzhenry, how did it happen that you had no miniatures done ? for yours was a regular marriage, was it not ? Every body delighted, and jewels and plate, and all that sort of thing ; and then Lord Fitzhenry is so handsome. Lady Saville, don’t you think Lord Fitzhenry is the most beautiful man you ever saw, and the most agreeable ?”

“ Why I don’t know how far I may venture to answer that question. What would Sir George say ?” replied Lady Saville, laughing.

“ Oh ! Sir George is very tall and good looking too, and dresses himself very well ; but still he does not put on his

neckcloth near so well as Lord Fitzhenry; and after all, the neckcloth is the principal thing in a man, and Lady Fitzhenry is certainly the most fortunate of people; but she takes her good luck very quietly, I must say—not even to have talked of her wedding gown! was it not strange?”

By this time every thing was thoroughly admired, examined, and descanted upon in Emmeline’s room, and many a question put to her, which she found rather difficult to answer.

“ Well, where do we proceed to next ?” said Lady Saville, going out into the gallery. “ What room is this ?” pointing to Ernest’s.

“ Oh! that is Lord Fitzhenry’s,” answered Emmeline hastily; “ we had better not go there.”

“Why not?” enquired Lady Saville.

“He may be engaged with business,” replied Emmeline, conscious she was colouring.

“Engaged? why you know he is out hunting twenty miles off; but at any rate, we may knock and demand admission.” And she knocked at the door. No sound was to be heard, and she turned the lock. “Why I really believe, Lady Fitzhenry,” continued she, “you are afraid of going in, for fear of finding all my worthy cousin’s former *cheres amies* hanging round the room on pegs, like Blue-beard’s wives.”

At this sally, Miss Danvers laughed violently. “I am dying to go in.—Dear Lady Saville, pray, pray open the door; I am sure we shall find something odd.”

Emmeline could think of no further

reason to give for not entering; and, in truth, felt rather glad of the opportunity so forced upon her to visit that room where Fitzhenry had passed and still passed so many hours of his life. A person's apartment is certainly the next best thing to their society, and even ranks in the gratification of our feelings before a letter; we seem to be admitted into all their occupations, even into their very thoughts. Then the little things belonging to them scattered about identify them so much to us. Every one must have experienced this when going into the room that has been inhabited by some dear friend immediately after their departure; the pens they have used still lying wet on the table, the books they had been reading—a glove, or handkerchief

forgotten. How strongly do such trifles sometimes affect us, and give us a deceitful feeling of their presence !

Lady Saville had opened the door into Fitzhenry's room, and Emmeline had gone in with the rest, when luckily, after Miss Selina had expressed her astonishment at Lord Fitzhenry's sleeping in the little couch bed, and had enquired of Lady Saville whether it was not very droll—a book of French caricatures attracted and fixed the attention of the whole party, and Emmeline was thus left at liberty to look at every thing in the room, and indulge in her own reflections.

There was the table at which he wrote, the chair on which he sat, and she placed herself in it. On the table, among a confusion of parliamentary

papers, pamphlets, bills, &c. was a volume of Petrarch, lying open, as if lately read, and by it the cover of a letter recently torn open. It was directed to Fitzhenry, and in a woman's hand. On the seal, were the words—“*Tout ou rien*”—words that said volumes to poor Emmeline's heart. She tried to make out the post-mark, but it was so blotted over that she could only decypher the date, which convinced her it had been that very day received! With a sort of shudder she threw it down again, and, getting up from her seat, her eye was attracted by two drawings that hung over the chimney-piece—they were evidently views in Italy and Greece. In both these, were the same two figures: below one of

the drawings, these lines from Lord Byron were written :—

“ Sweet Florence ! those were pleasant times
When worlds were staked for ladies eyes.
Had bards as many realms as rhymes,
Thy charms might raise new Anthonies.

“ Though fate forbids such things to be,
Yet, by thine eyes and ringlets curled,
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world.”

Beneath the other drawing, was a Greek inscription. They were slight sketches, and the figures were small; one of them had an air of Fitzhenry not to be mistaken by her who knew his every look and gesture. The other was a female figure. Emmeline's eyes were rivetted on the drawings; she could not doubt who, and what they repre-

sented; some days of peculiar enjoyment, some tender moments were thus recalled, and poor Emmeline's spirit groaned within her.

On the mantle-piece, lay Fitzhenry's pencil-case, pocket-book, and several of those sort of trifles that seem so intimately connected with the person to whom they belong. Emmeline had a gratification in taking them in her hand, and examining them minutely: at last, she found a small turquoise brooch which she had often observed in his neck-handkerchief; it had apparently been originally meant for a woman's ornament. Emmeline had on one almost exactly similar. The temptation to exchange them was too strong to be resisted—with trembling fingers she undid her own pin; but again carefully

examined Fitzhenry's, for fear of his detecting the exchange. At the back of his, in small letters, she saw "Firenze," but they were almost worn away; her courage however nearly failed her, although she thought she might contrive to scratch something on her own brooch to resemble the inscription, but, just at that minute, Lady Saville, who had finished her book of caricatures, and looked at every thing in the room, coming up, proposed their proceeding to the rest of the house—Emmeline almost started with the embarrassment of guilt: she had no time for further doubt, she hastily threw down on the marble-slab her own brooch, and carried off her husband's.

Almost terrified at what she had done, when they met in the drawing-room be-

fore dinner, she looked anxiously at Fitzhenry's handkerchief, and, when he turned towards the light, she had the satisfaction to see her own pin placed as usual, and, consequently, that he had not discovered her robbery.

To those who may be inclined to think the feelings of Emmeline on such a trifle exaggerated, we have only to say, that proving themselves never to have been *in love* we can no more attempt to speak to their feelings than to describe colours to a person born blind.

Delighted and elated with her prize, poor Emmeline's spirits rose above their now usual state, and when, after dinner, Lady Saville declared she wanted exercise to get rid of a headache, and proposed dancing, Emmeline readily forwarded her wish and offered her

service as musician. Every one willingly acquiesced, and they soon made up a quadrille. Fitzhenry and Mr. Pelham were the only two who did not join in the dance, but continued standing over the fire, seemingly engaged in very earnest conversation. When the quadrille was ended, Emmeline played a waltz; this was still less to be resisted, and the whole party immediately swung round the room.

“ I can play a waltz,” said Mrs. Danvers, the purse-making young lady’s mother, who had just then entered the room—“ I can’t bear to see you, Lady Fitzhenry, labouring at the pianoforte, do let *me* play who can do nothing else; and do you go and join the dancers.”—And she insisted on Emmeline resigning her post.

All were engaged: there was no one left to waltz with. Emmeline was young; by nature gay, she liked dancing as all gay young people do. The music, the sight of others dancing, all had revived her former love for the amusement, and, not liking to deprive any one else of her partner, she set off alone after the rest. Unsupported, and lately out of practise, she soon grew giddy, the room turned round, she knew not where she went, and, to save herself from falling, she caught hold of something she had run against, putting her other hand over her eyes till the dizziness had gone off. When it had subsided, still keeping her hold, she looked up to see where she was.

It was her husband's arm she had hold of.

She could scarcely check a scream of alarm which burst from her on seeing what she had done: she hastily withdrew her hand, her flushed cheek turning deadly pale. Fitzhenry was looking at her attentively, but with apparent surprise, and indeed, even apparent displeasure.

The whole occurrence, which did not occupy above a minute, had been mistaken by the dancers. They thought she was proposing to him to waltz with her, and Mr. Moore hastily said, "That is right, Lady Fitzhenry; make that lazy fellow dance. No one waltzes so well or *was* so fond of it; and it is too ridiculous his giving himself already the airs of an old married man!"

"Lord and Lady Fitzhenry dance together! Oh! that will be charming,"

exclaimed Miss Selina, clapping her hands in foolish ecstasy.

“Come, come along, Fitzhenry,” rejoined Mr. Moore: “don’t be bashful; ask Lady Fitzhenry in proper form to do you the favour of dancing with you.”

“Certainly,” said Ernest, rather embarrassed: “certainly—with pleasure, if Lady Fitzhenry wishes—I mean, if she will waltz with me, and can get no better partner.”

“Oh! I never meant that—I was only giddy——,” said Emmeline, hardly knowing what she said or did. The other waltzers stopped. “Now, Lady Fitzhenry, we will follow you,” said the persecuting Mr. Moore. Any further explanation or objection was impossible: waltz together they must—and Fitzhenry put his arm round her.

All those who talk of the waltz as of a dance possessing no other attraction, no more interest than that of any other, and owing the ill name it bears merely to a cry raised against it by prejudice in a country where as yet it is but newly introduced, have never waltzed with *him* or *her* they love; for then their own feelings would answer, and silence them.

Emmeline felt her husband's arm round her waist; her hand was clasped in his, and his breath played on her forehead. Her feelings almost overcame her! Her heart beat so violently that she could hardly breathe, and again her head turned round.

Fitzhenry, as Mr. Moore had said, was an excellent waltzer—he had waltzed much at Vienna, where his intimacy with Lady Florence had commenced by her

teaching him this very dance. Without any seeming effort, he bore along Emmeline's slight form—for already she could hardly support herself. She fancied he pressed her more closely to him—it could, alas! be only fancy; but quite overcome, and complaining of faintness, she begged him, in a scarcely audible voice, to stop. He immediately withdrew his arm, took her to a chair, and seeing her really near fainting, fetched her a glass of water.

Every thing conspired to overpower poor Emmeline: it was with difficulty she restrained her tears, and as soon as she could trust herself to walk, she left the room. But no Fitzhenry followed to ask an explanation of her conduct; and in darkness, and alone, she no longer endeavoured to stifle her feelings. Fitz-

henry was evidently not pleased: there had been an expression of displeasure, of formal, almost ironical civility on his countenance, when forced to offer himself as her partner, that she had never seen before, and which penetrated her heart. And then, though mere common compassion had made him assist her when unwell, yet it was almost beyond his usual coldness to allow her to leave the room alone, careless of what had affected her, or whether she had recovered or not.

It was impossible to endeavour to explain herself before others, and Fitzhenry now carefully avoided their ever being *tête-à-tête*. “Thus ends,” thought Emmeline, “the vain dream—the last hope of ever winning him! Indifference is growing into dislike; and soon we

shall be more than total strangers to each other."

As she uttered these words, a gentle knock at the door made her heart beat. It could only be him—and in an instant passing to the most delightful anticipations, with a trembling voice, she gave leave to enter. The door opened: but even through the darkness of the room, she soon saw her mistake, for it was merely Lady Saville who came to enquire after her.

"My dear Lady Fitzhenry," said she, "I fear you are not well, so I ventured to come and doctor you a little."

"Oh! it is nothing," replied Emmeline, with difficulty restraining fresh tears of disappointment: "I have not waltzed lately, and it made me very giddy, that is all."

"And perhaps you should not have

waltzed now," added Lady Saville; "for really you have not been looking well lately; we have all remarked it. You overfag yourself with your constant endeavours to amuse our good country neighbours, and with those long rides which you will take, for I am sure you are not strong."

Emmeline, wishing to avoid all conversation on the subject of her looks and health, conscious that both had suffered from her loss of happiness, hastily got up, declaring she was quite recovered; and, after bathing her eyes and temples with some cold water, she proposed returning to the drawing-room.

"But are you quite sure you are well enough?" said Lady Saville—"had you not better lie down a little, for you still look pale."

Emmeline insisted on going.

“ Well, I understand your not liking to make a fuss and excite enquiries ; for one’s friends will tease one so with remedies : so if you are really able, come along, lean on me ;” and she drew Emmeline’s arm within hers.

When they entered the room, Fitzhenry went up to them : hoped Emmeline was quite recovered, and brought a chair for her ; but all was done in cold civility, and no more passed. Mr. Pelham came immediately and sat by her, evidently and purposely entering into conversation to save her from being an object of attention to the rest. The dancing went on ; but Emmeline’s spirits were gone, and she took no more part in what passed around her that evening.

“What capital fun we have had!” said Selina, as they all left the drawing-room for the night. I am sure I could dance all day long: could not you, Lady Fitzhenry? Don’t you like dancing of all things? I am sure you must, you dance so well.”

Emmeline absently answered—“I *have* liked it, but it is a taste that soon goes off.”

“Soon, indeed!” said Mrs. Danvers, who had been playing the waltzes and quadrilles to them for the last hour, “if it is already gone with you: why you talk as if you were an old woman, Lady Fitzhenry. I don’t think it is many months since I saw you apparently enjoying the amusement as much as any one—indeed, not many minutes.”

Emmeline, vexed at her forgetfulness, did not answer. She saw her husband's eyes were fixed upon her ; and, anxious to put an end to so disagreeable an evening, wishing them all good night, she hastened into her own room.

When there, she found that the brooch—the precious brooch, was missing. She dared not tell her maid of her loss, for fear that any enquiry after it would lead to a discovery of her theft ; but, as soon as she was gone, and all quiet in the house, Emmeline examined every part of her own room, of the gallery, and of the drawing-room ; but all in vain. Tired and annoyed, she was at last obliged to give up the search, trusting that daylight would betray its hiding place.

CHAPTER VI.

—— It grieved her not a little, tho'
She seemed it well to beare.
And thus she reasons with herself—
'Some fault perhaps in me,
'Somewhat is done, that so he doth :
'Alas ! what may it be ?
'How may I winne him to myself ?
'He is a man, and men
'Have imperfections ; it behoves
'Me pardon nature then.'

THE PATIENT COUNTESS.

THE next morning, before her maid came to her, Emmeline renewed her search, but with as little success as on the night before. It delayed her dressing ; and when she entered the break-

fast-room, all were assembled—Mr. Moore coming in at an opposite door at the same minute.

“Who owns a turquoise pin?” said he, in a loud, sententious voice, as he approached the breakfast table, “with some mysterious, and, I conclude, very sentimental letters at the back.”

Fitzhenry, who was reading the newspaper, instantly laid it down. He felt for his brooch, and forgetting that he had not put on any that morning, exclaimed, at the same moment with Emmeline—“I do!” Both looked at each other, and coloured.

“Well, I never knew such a pattern pair,” said Moore; “they have so conscientiously every thing in common, that they have but one brooch between

them, and I suppose wear it alternately. Pin of my pin—brooch of my brooch,” added he, laughing: “without the help of Solomon, I really don’t know how to decide the matter between you, for it is quite a law case in his line, and much beyond me.”

“Pray give it me,” said Emmeline, in a low voice, inexpressibly annoyed.

“The brooch is mine,” said Fitzhenry, holding out his hand for it, and apparently not much less discomposed.

“Hold, if you please,” said Moore; “I have not studied the law, up three pair of stairs in Lincoln’s Inn, and poured over musty books for nothing. I must have proofs and witnesses before I adjudge the disputed prize. Let us call into court the letters at the back, they

may throw some light on the subject—
 Let me see,” continued he, putting on his nose the spectacles of one of the company, and affecting an important, legal tone, “ *Fi* is very easily distinguished, but what the deuce is it that comes between that and *ze*, which are plainly the letters at the end. *Fi* looks a little as if it really did belong to one Lord Fitzhenry, I must own ; (if he is so unsentimental as to wear his own name next his heart ;) but even under that extraordinary supposition, I can’t turn *ze* into *ry* by any trick of law or logic—so I am still at a loss ; for do what I will, I cannot, with these letters, spell *fidele*, or *fidelità*, or any of those pretty words.”

Emmeline said no more ; she tried to busy herself with the breakfast-things,

but poured out every thing wrong, and made all sorts of strange mistakes. Fitzhenry got up, and went to Mr. Moore.

“Come, Moore, no more of this nonsense ; give me the brooch, and Lady Fitzhenry and I can afterwards settle to which of us it belongs.”

“As lord of the manor, I suppose you claim all stray goods,” rejoined Moore ; “otherwise I must say yours is a most despotic measure, and a little like the lion in the fable.”

At this, Miss Danvers, who had been some time tittering, burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

“How droll Mr. Moore is !” she exclaimed : “pray, Lord Fitzhenry, let me look at this brooch ; there is such a fuss about it that it must be something very

extraordinary, and I am sure I could make out the letters," said she, looking significantly at Moore, "for I know all sorts of mottos, and sentiments, and those kind of things, for brooches, and bracelets, and purses, and seals,"—and she held out her hand for the brooch.

"It is not worth looking at," said Fitzhenry, coldly, as he put it into his pocket.

"I think the lion is a little gruff," whispered the young lady to her neighbour at the breakfast-table, and again laughed violently at what she imagined to be wit.

"Well," she continued, "I give notice, that when I marry, I mean to have my own way, and be my own mistress, and not be so submissive as Lady Fitzhenry.

I shall have as many brooches as I please, given me by whom I please ; for I suspect," added she, significantly, " there is some story about this brooch—some mystery we none of us know ; but I am determined I will find it out : it is just the sort of thing I like—and see how Lady Fitzhenry blushes—I am getting near the mark, I suspect."

" Don't rattle on so foolishly, Selina," said her mother, trying to check her talkative daughter.

" That is what mamma always says," retorted Miss Danvers, pettishly, and looking round for support in her denial of the charge of folly. " Mamma never lets me speak, which is very hard, for I am sure I am saying no harm," added she, addressing Mr. Moore,

whom she seemed to have dubbed her champion.

“ I never presume to contradict mammas,” answered he ; “ otherwise I should say that such a mouth could never utter any thing which it would not be agreeable to hear.”

The young lady giggled, and, encouraged by the compliment, went on—

“ Pray, Mr. Moore, *seriously*, as you are a lawyer, will you tell me, have husbands a right by law to read all their wives’ letters, as well as seize on their naughty brooches? Lady Fitzhenry, does Lord Fitzhenry read all your letters?”

“ I should think he would be sorry to take the trouble,” said Emmeline, forced to reply to so direct a question,

although from the quickness with which one silly idea chased another in Selina's mind, she seldom required any answer.

“ Why ? have you a great many correspondents ? I do so like correspondents, don't you ? and to get letters all crossed, and written under the seal, and every where ; is it not delightful ? I have so many friends I doat upon, that there is not a day I don't write two or three long letters, and tell them every thing I feel and think ; and then it passes away the morning so well ; don't it, Mr. Moore ? ”

“ Why, I really cannot boast of as many confidential friends, or as much capacity of heart as you seem to be blessed with,” said he ; “ and, moreover,

I have nothing to confide; so that I fear a very small note would contain all my feelings and thoughts."

"Dear, how shocking! and how odd! I have so many charming friends, to whom I have so much to say, that I could write to them for ever; and then, when we have nothing particular to tell, we suppose ourselves people in a novel, and so carry on a story, you know, under feigned names: mine is Celestina."

"It must be very interesting; and may I ask," continued Moore, "who is the hero worthy of such a heroine?"

"Oh, that I won't tell," said Miss Danvers, slyly—"that is a secret; but, if you choose to guess, I will tell you when you are wrong. So far I will go; but I won't allow of any questions about tall

and short, and fat and thin, and that sort of thing."

Here all laughed ; and Selina, quite satisfied that it was at her wit, glanced round the table with an eye of triumph, till, encountering Fitzhenry's grave, pre-occupied countenance, which, plainly showed that he had not joined in the applause, she said : " Ah, Lord Fitzhenry is still thinking of his brooch, and of that blush of Lady Fitzhenry's, which seems to stick in his throat."

" I am sure you are very good to take so much interest in what concerns us," replied Fitzhenry, dryly.

" Oh no, it is not good at all ; for it is my greatest amusement to find out every body's little secrets, and I am determined I will get at the bottom of

this somehow." After a pause, she addressed Emmeline. " By the bye, now I recollect, you were very busy poking about all Lord Fitzhenry's things in his room, yesterday morning; but what that may have to do with all this, I can't just now make out."

Fitzhenry looked up astonished, and his eyes were fixed on Emmeline's crimson cheek; but, though he looked at her attentively for a few minutes, he said nothing; and, by this time, the frowns from Mrs. Danvers had become so repeated, and so decided, that they at last succeeded in checking the exuberant loquacity of the lively Selina.

An awkward silence ensued; every one seemed disconcerted, and Fitzhenry,

for the first time, to Emmeline's observation, appeared totally out of humour. He soon got up from the breakfast-table, and left the room.

It was a thoroughly wet day ; even the gentlemen could not go out—and, to pass the morning, Lady Saville proposed practising some songs, in which one of them took a part. Poor Emmeline, who could not rally her spirits at all, felt little inclined to sing—but she complied, till at length, fatigued and harassed, she gave up her place at the pianoforte to Selina, and went to her own room. There on the table she found a note addressed to her, in Fitzhenry's handwriting. She trembled as she opened it—it contained her own brooch, and these words :—

“ I return you, what I suppose to be yours; how it came into my possession, I know not. I have kept to my promise—I do all in my power to promote your happiness—do then the same by me, and respect feelings which I have honestly confessed to you.

“ FITZHENRY.”

Emmeline read this over and over, scarcely knowing what the latter words could refer to; so perfectly innocent did she feel of any infringement of their agreement, and so satisfied that she had never, directly or indirectly, to him or others, hinted at her cruel situation. However, at last, calling to mind the way in which Selina had that morning so provokingly entertained the company with her silly remarks, she felt convinced,

in spite of Fitzhenry's well-known contempt for the person who made them, that they had raised suspicions in his mind of her having taken advantage of his absence to invade his apartment, and pry into his secrets ; perhaps had even led him to imagine that she had stolen his favourite brooch with the foolish intention of wantonly tormenting him.

Wounded tenderness, and offended pride, alternately wrung her heart. To clear herself was impossible, without confessing feelings, which she could not bring herself to avow to one who evidently despised and abhorred her. In total despair at the cruelly unfavourable light in which untoward circumstances always placed her before him, whom it was the first, almost the only wish of her

heart to conciliate and please, poor Emmeline wept in bitterness of soul.

Some explanation on her part, however, was absolutely necessary, but it was long before she could resolve on what to say. At length, entering into no particulars, she wrote merely these words.

“ You do me great injustice, and totally mistake me : explanation, however, is impossible—indeed, would probably be only uninteresting and irksome to you, and therefore I shall not attempt any.”

“ EMMELINE.”

How to give this to Fitzhenry unnoticed was the next difficulty, without the risk of a *tête-à-tête* interview, which in the present nervous and irritated state

of her feelings, she had no courage to seek. She heard him in his room, which joined to hers, and there he remained all the morning alone.

With her note concealed in her hand, and with tell-tale eyes, Emmeline joined the party at the usual hour of luncheon, in case her absence might create surprise. Mr. Pelham's attention was soon attracted towards her.

“I fear you have not yet recovered your waltzing of last night,” said he kindly, as if to account for her disordered appearance, which no one could help observing: “you have still a headache I am sure, and I am not surprised at it. When you *give balls*, you should put out your stoves; I wonder how any of the dancers could stand the heat of the room last night: a

walk would do you good ; I think it is clearing up ; will you let me accompany you ? ”

Emmeline feeling, in spite of her endeavours, that tears still forced themselves into her eyes, and aware that she was not quite in a fit state to make the *agréable* to her company, readily agreed. The fresh air revived and composed her, and, by degrees, her usual spirits returned. Pelham first talked on indifferent subjects. At length, some improvement in the place which he was observing, brought in Fitzhenry's name, when, after a moment's pause, he said—“ I see my friend Fitzhenry has no patience with that poor silly girl, Miss Danvers. I have often lectured him on the subject of his want of toleration for folly, and of the way

that he is apt to take things that should only be laughed at, *au grand serieux*. It is the fault of all grave, substantial characters like his; and he allows trifles to go too deep with him. To be sure, the poor Selina is a fool, *comme on en voit peu*; but it is not necessary to attend to her, and I should be almost tempted with regard to her, to give *you* the same advice as to Fitzhenry, not any way to notice the nonsense that flows from her. There are some people who can make themselves important in society only by teasing others; and if they once find out this power, they never let it rest unemployed. I am very impudent I think," added Pelham, "in presuming to give you advice; but, as the friend of Fitzhenry, I feel that I have a sort

of established right to lecture even you."

Emmeline looked up and smiled, to show in what good part she took what was so kindly meant.

"You are very young, my dear Lady Fitzhenry," continued he; "very new to the world, and your own character is naturally so open, so natural,—that you are perhaps *too* artless. Some part we almost all must, to a degree, act in this world. We are all sometimes obliged to put a mask on our features and feelings. You know I am a *diplomate* by profession," said Pelham, endeavouring to give a light turn to his advice, seeing how much at the moment his *thin skinned* auditor needed the mask he talked of. "Fitzhenry has been much used to the

world—to women of the world,” continued he, with a quick, embarrassed manner. “Perhaps *you* are too much without art, for him to believe you artless, paradoxical as this may sound. In short, as you are destined to live in a wicked, unfeeling world, I could, I believe, wish you to be a little more wicked and unfeeling yourself.”

At this moment, Fitzhenry, with his gun and dogs, appeared at a little distance, and when he saw them, came towards them. It was fortunate, for it would have been difficult for Pelham and Emmeline to have extricated themselves from the conversation in which they were engaged ; for, vague as it might have appeared to any third person, those concerned both feared they had gone too

far ; the one, in what he had said, the other, in what she had listened to.

As Fitzhenry approached, Emmeline resolved she would endeavour to exert that degree of self-control which Pelham recommended, and a feeling of offended pride, and of injustice towards her on Fitzhenry's part, enabled her to succeed. She drew her bonnet over her face, and though her heart beat, and at first her voice trembled, she forced herself to speak on indifferent subjects, as if nothing had past, or rather, as if what *had* passed, had not had power to wound her ; and, taking an opportunity when Pelham was a yard or two behind, she held out her note to Fitzhenry. For a minute, he seemed reluctant to take it ; but the next, received it from her hand,

and putting it hastily within his waistcoat, immediately began talking with Pelham about the view he was then looking at.

When they met at dinner-time, Fitzhenry's manner to her was as usual; but the party was so large, that they could have little intercourse. In the evening, to avoid any possibility of the waltzing scene of the preceding night, Emmeline immediately took out her work, about which she pretended to be particularly interested, and left the rest of the party to provide for their own amusement.

She and Fitzhenry still appeared to be the objects of Mr. Moore's particular observation, and for that purpose, seating himself by Emmeline, "I hope Lady Fitz-

henry," said he, "you have forgiven me for not proving myself a better advocate for you this morning; but really Fitzhenry's frowns were so very *eloquent* and *convincing*, that I could say no more on the subject."

"And you need not say more now," answered Fitzhenry, rather impatiently, without taking his eyes from the Review he was reading; "that foolish affair is settled; we have both our own, and both are satisfied."

"Alas!" thought Emmeline, "how much he is mistaken!"

Moore looked at them alternately with an air of incredulity. "Well, you are strange mysterious people," said he; "but if you are content, I am sure so am I;" and, laying his hand on the first

book he saw, and which proved to be Childe Harold, he read some lines of it aloud.

“Are you a great admirer of Lord Byron, Lady Fitzhenry?” said he.

“Of course,” replied Emmeline, forcing a smile.

“Of course of his poetry,” continued Moore; “but I hope *not* of his sentiments: his descriptions of scenery are beautiful, and sometimes those of feeling and affection; but when he comes to paint his own dark, venom-spitting mind, he is hateful; and it always provokes me, that he should feel the beauties of nature so deeply, and not be the better for that feeling. Have you ever been in Italy, Lady Fitzhenry?”

“No, never,” said Emmeline shortly,

not much liking to get on such tender ground.

“I should have sworn you had ; I have heard you talk as if you knew all Italy by heart ; and you have in your composition, that suavity of mind and temper, which the sun, the air, the beauteous scenes of Italy, the dark blue of its seas give. I should have been ten times more detestable than I am, had I not passed so much of my life in the pure, soft atmosphere of Italy. I don’t know, by the bye, that my friend Fitzhenry there proves my doctrine true ; I don’t think he has benefited much by such education ; vide the pin affair. But I suppose it is only the effect of change of climate, and that the cold, dark fogs of this country, have again contracted

his heart, and made it selfish and English."

Fitzhenry said nothing, and apparently was engrossed by his book. Mr. Moore continued. "Many a battle Fitzhenry and I have had about Lord Byron—I wonder what side you would take. I never can feel for his imaginary woes. What the deuce is the matter with the fellow? what does he want? He has had every thing this world can give. All the fools and fine ladies running after him, and paying him court *à l'envi l'un de l'autre*; and yet he went grumbling and whining about, despising, and turning up his nose at us all, who are ten times better than himself. He chose, too, to hate and ill-treat his wife, after he had insisted, almost against her own

will, or at least against her judgment, to marry her, and she an heiress, into the bargain. This was to be a new distress; and on this he begun, *de plus belle*, to grumble and whine, and moreover to blackguard. Now, Fitzhenry, how do you defend all this?"

"I don't pretend to defend him in any thing," said Fitzhenry, very impatiently; "I only say, that persons with totally different feelings and characters cannot judge of each other. What would be keen suffering to one, might be none to another. I might answer you in the words of Madame de Staël—" *Les gens mediocres ne cessent de s'étonner que le talent ait des besoins differens des leurs*; and as for Lord Byron's private history, neither you nor I have

any business with it, or know any thing about it."

"The deuce we don't?" said Moore, "many thanks, *par parenthese*, for your pretty compliment to me, *au sujet de la mediocrité*; but we will let that pass: I am well used to such from you," said he, laughing; "but I cannot give up so quietly Lord Byron, who certainly has had the bad taste (to say no worse) to take pains to tell us all what a villain he is, so that few of us can be ignorant of his private history."

Fitzhenry said nothing; and resuming his book, turned away, as if the light hurt his eyes.

"Lady Fitzhenry, don't *you* agree with me about Lord Byron," continued the indefatigable Moore.

“ I believe not,” said Emmeline with a tremulous voice—“ I *should* not—I think no one can, or should presume to judge of the feelings, hardly of the situation and conduct of another.” An involuntary sigh finished the sentence ; fortunately it escaped her neighbour’s ear, as he was hastily turning over the leaves of the book, reading a line here and there.

“ *Il faut pourtant etre juste,*” said Moore ; “ and, to give the devil his due, Lord Byron is in truth a most delightful poet. We all find that he describes our own thoughts and feelings, which we have not had the wit to put into rhyme ourselves. Here is a pretty specimen of sing-song sentiment, for instance :—

‘ Florence, whom I will love as well
As ever yet was said or sung,
(Since Orpheus sang his spouse from hell,)
Whilst thou art fair, and I am young ;

‘ Sweet Florence, those were pleasant times
When worlds were staked for ladies eyes ;
Had bards as many realms as rhymes,
Thy charms might raise new Anthonies.

‘ Though fate forbids such things to be,
Yet, by thine eye and ringlets curled,
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world.’

Prudent vows those, making them to depend on his own youth, and his fair one’s beauty. What think you of that moral sentiment, Lady Fitzhenry?”

Emmeline dared not speak ; she feared a double meaning might be given to whatever she said ; but the crimson on

her cheeks betrayed how well she knew the lines. Fitzhenry, for an instant, looked up—his face was scarcely less suffused than hers, and hastily rising from his seat, he left the room.

“Alas!” thought Emmeline, “again he will accuse me of braving him; of purposely wounding his feelings!” and it was with difficulty she could conceal from Mr. Moore how much he had discomposed her.

The next day, when she went through the gallery, the door of Fitzhenry’s room chanced to be open, and as her eyes eagerly wandered into it, she observed that the two drawings had disappeared from over the chimney. What this meant, she could but too well guess: she plainly saw that he suspected her of meanly

endeavouring to pry into his feelings, and to trace each thought inimical to herself, with a view (perhaps he concluded) to gain at least the power of tormenting him, when hopeless of obtaining any other. “ Oh, Fitzhenry !” thought she, “ will the time ever come, when you will know me better, and learn to do me justice ?”

CHAPTER VII.

Call ye the city gay? its revels joyous?

—They may be so to you; for ye are young
(Belike) and happy. She is young in years,
But often in mid-spring will blighting winds
Do Autumn's work: and there is pain of heart
That doth the work of time; can cloud the brow,
And pale the cheek, and sober down the spirit.
This gewgaw scene hath fewer charms for her,
Than for the crone, who, numbering sixty winters,
Pronounceth it all folly.—Wonder not
'Tis left thus willingly.

OLD PLAY.

PARLIAMENT met early this year, and
Lord Fitzhenry signified his intention

of being in town at its opening. The party at Arlingford, therefore, before long, dispersed different ways; and, with a heavy heart, Emmeline went to settle herself in Grosvenor-street. Young as she was, and disposed for gaiety as she had been but a few months past, she could, in her circumstances, only look to the world and to the routine of fashionable life in London with dismay. She would be thrown into a totally new society, where she had not a friend, scarcely an acquaintance. Had Fitzhenry been to her what he ought, how proudly would she, at her lover's side, have shown herself to an admiring world, as the being he had chosen. But this was not the situation of Emmeline, and she shrunk with a

feeling of apprehension from the tumult in which she would be left deserted and solitary.

She foresaw, too, that a London life would necessarily throw her and her husband more apart; for, little as she saw of him in the country, yet still in the course of the day she was certain of being in his society and of hearing his voice, although seldom now addressed in conversation to herself. In town, it would be easier for him to avoid her, and she much feared he would take advantage of the opportunities offered.

And Emmeline was right in her conjectures. Under pretence of business, and attendance at the House of Commons, he was so constantly from home, that

they rarely met. Their hours, too, were different; breakfast was no longer a certain moment for meeting; for, as it would now have obliged them to a daily *tête-à-tête*, it was brought to them in their separate apartments. During the morning, therefore, it was only by accident that they were ever together. Fitzhenry rarely dined at home, except when there was company; and, of course, living so much apart, Emmeline did not even know what his evening engagements were; and often they met by chance, for the first time, during forty-eight hours, in some distant place of amusement. If then he chanced to give her a look of kind recognition, poor Emmeline went home with her spirits raised, resolving to improve the advan-

tage she fancied she had gained ; but again, forty-eight hours passed in the same manner, and, perhaps, if then again they accidentally met, he would scarcely notice her.

Thus deserted, she saw she must submit to endeavour to make to herself an independent existence ; but it was a vain attempt when every thought, every feeling was with him. Lady Saville had offered herself as Emmeline's *chaperon*, on her first entry into the world of London society, and she could not have had a better companion ; for Lady Saville had just feeling enough to enable her to perform all her social duties without a shadow of blame, and even in her own set to obtain the character of being remark-

ably goodnatured;—but she had none of those refined sentiments, which could lead her to read and detect the emotions of Emmeline's heart. Pre-occupation of mind, variation of spirits and complexion, on a look or word; all such symptoms of a stricken heart she attributed to mere physical causes; sometimes rallying Emmeline on her *vapeurs*, but generally too much amused and occupied herself to doubt her companion being equally so. Had that companion's heart been gay and free as it was but a few months back, what attractions the world, into which she was now, for the first time, introduced, might have had for her!

Emmeline's beauty had much im-

proved since her marriage, and even by her loss of happiness ; for, in the place of the mere expression of youthful joy and good-humour, was a look of *senti-ment*, almost of languor, over her whole countenance and person, that added inexpressibly to its charm, and gave additional effect to her own peculiarly bright smile, when it was sometimes for a moment recalled.

As Fitzhenry's wife, she first attracted attention ; and, with pleasing manners, rank, riches, youth, and beauty at once to recommend her, she was soon sought for, admired, and courted ; and had she been willing to take advantage of the universal cry in her favour, Emmeline might, with little or no trouble on her part, have been

raised to that envied distinction, obtained no one knows how, or why, of being the *fashion*. For the world is so capricious and wayward in its preferences, that it often greets beings like Lady Fitzhenry (from circumstances regardless of its favour) with those winning, gracious smiles, which it perversely withholds from others most indefatigable in their efforts to obtain them. Witness the anxious and fatiguing labours of so many candidates for its patronage, their eternal struggles to grasp at what constantly escapes them, if for a moment they pause to take breath, or relax the little hold they have secured.

When individuals are blamed for either too much or too little love of the world, the different welcome it bestows seems

little considered. How little does the situation of a courted, fashionable girl, surrounded by partners and admirers, and thus at liberty to give herself every impertinent air, which a vain mind, and a selfish, unfeeling heart dictate, resemble that of the unobserved, disregarded being, who, night after night, follows some elderly, undistinguished *chaperon* through the regular round of London amusements, and, seated by her hour after hour in dull neglect, seems at last to become a part of the bench she rests on, till reduced, perhaps, to be even envious of its insensibility; yet the same enlivening music plays to both; the same bright lights are cast on both, and the same glittering, buzzing crowd surrounds them; but ques-

tion them, after their night's dissipation, as to the entertainment at which they were both present, and how different will be their accounts of the same scene—of what is called the gay world! of all worlds the most melancholy to those who are not gay.

And Emmeline, in spite of her general popularity, was among that number: how far she might equally have resisted its snares, and despised its pleasures, had there been corresponding joy within, we cannot pretend to say; but, as it was, the first transient amusement produced by novelty, very soon went off, leaving her mind wearied and depressed, and, at any time, in the gayest scene, the sight of Fitzhenry at a distance, in the crowd of a

ball-room, or at the opera, had power instantly to dispel every feeling of enjoyment ; and then, totally regardless of what passed around her, or of the flattering compliments addressed to her, her eyes were rivetted to the spot where he was, busied in the eager examination of those near him, in search of that form, those features, which had captivated him ; and often when she had observed him engrossed in conversation with any woman, or even when merely paying the common attentions of civility, breathless with agitation, she has enquired who the favoured being was, as if in strange eagerness “ most to seek what she would most avoid ;” but still Lady Florence never

appeared ; her dreaded name was never mentioned.

Although now, to all appearance, totally deserted by her husband, still he kept strictly to his engagement, with her. Every possible indulgence and pleasure which money could give, were hers ; and in such outward attentions he even seemed occupied about her. The horse she rode at Arlingford, although formerly his favourite hunter, was now considered as entirely hers, and without her even expressing a wish on the subject, had been brought to town for her exclusive use ; he had himself secured a box at the opera for her, after having ascertained in what part of the house she would prefer it ; and,

on their first arrival in town, he had again repeated his desire, that she should ask any and every one she liked to the house. In short, she was again and again enjoined to consult only her own happiness and enjoyment in every thing : kind words in the mouth of any other husband ; but, producing the painful conviction of her loneliness, they brought but tears into Emmeline's eyes, when hastily pronounced by Fitzhenry, with his hand on the lock of the door, in order that he might leave her the instant they were uttered, and so escape the possibility of thanks or comment.

Wishing, however, to show that she was sensible of his intended kindness, in the liberty he gave, and with a last faint

hope, that by making his home agreeable, she might entice him to be more with her, Emmeline determined to endeavour to collect society at her house. She took a favourable moment to inform Fitzhenry of her intention, and of the nights for which she had made the invitations. He seemed much to approve of the plan, but said nothing as to his own attendance.

On the day appointed for the first party, Emmeline, as was generally now the case, dined alone. During her solitary repast, she made firm resolutions that she would act upon the advice Pelham had given her at Arlingford—put that mask on her feelings which he recommended, and adopt those manners of the world that he said Fitzhenry admired.

Emmeline had 'a sort of natural *tact* on all such subjects; and, had she been in the habit of doing the honours of her own house, during her whole life, she could not have acquitted herself better. All were delighted with her, and with the evening's amusement. It was not till towards the close of it, that Fitzhenry appeared. Long had poor Emmeline's eyes anxiously wandered toward the door, watching for his entrance; and when at last he came, it was not without difficulty that she continued to perform her gay part with spirit; but a momentary break in what she was saying—a rapid beating of her heart, and the deepened colour in her cheek, alone betrayed her agitation at his presence.

He came up to her ; remarked how well the rooms were lighted ; complimented her on the disposal of the furniture—on her arrangement of the flowers : and, in return, the poor hypocrite played her part well. She carelessly asked his opinion as to the placing of the lamps and the pianoforte. Even attempted at rallying him on his absence ; and to all appearance no two people could be on an easier footing.

The company were by this time beginning to clear away. As they dispersed, Emmeline eagerly looked around for Fitzhenry. She thought he had noticed her more than usual, and she determined to follow up this little fancied success, by assuming a careless gaiety, which she certainly did not feel, but

which she sometimes believed she would do well to adopt. When, therefore, she had performed her last act of civility to her last guest, she hurried back to the spot where she had left him. But he too had disappeared. Alone she paced the now silent, empty rooms, lost in thought, and totally forgetful of the lateness of the hour, until at length, the entrance of Reynolds rousing her from her trance, she hastily retired into her own room—but not to sleep.—Various thoughts agitated her mind : sometimes even hope, (albeit of late not a usual visitor,) forced itself in : Fitzhenry had certainly smiled on her ; he had appeared pleased ; had even seemed to take interest in her attempt, and she determined to persevere.

Emmeline counted the days to her next party, as a school-girl does those to her first ball ; for, on its success she again built flattering expectations for the future—expectations which perhaps to herself were hardly to be defined. “ But at all events, I shall certainly see him,” she thought, as with most excuseable care and anxiety she endeavoured to improve, to the best advantage, those personal attractions which nature had bestowed upon her. But in vain she decked her hair with the freshest flowers ; in vain she listened for, and anxiously watched the result of, each loud knock at her door. Every one she had asked, flew to her invitation, (such is the power of novelty in London,) all but *him* for whom the whole had been prepared.

Disheartened and dispirited, poor Emmeline almost resolved on seeking some pretext for putting off altogether her third entertainment; but a good humoured word of recognition from her husband, as they met in the lobby of the opera-house, the Tuesday before, again made her yield to the natural buoyancy of her disposition; and Fitzhenry, having asked Pelham and the Savilles to dine with him on the day appointed for her party, his presence seemed thus secured. All now, therefore, appeared propitious to Emmeline. Fitzhenry himself was, on that day, evidently more disposed for cheerfulness than he had been of late; and the smallness of their party at dinner, obliging them to more intercourse than they had had for long,

Emmeline gave way to the exhilaration of spirits belonging to youth and hope, and, her cheeks again bright with the flush of enjoyment, she bore her part in the conversation with unusual liveliness. Emmeline was aware of this herself, and could not, moreover, help indulging in the flattering idea, that even Fitzhenry had (at least for that once) thought her agreeable. With a step made still more light than usual by the innocent exultation of the moment, she gaily bounded up to the drawing-room with Lady Saville, to make the necessary preparations for the expected company. Knowing how much Fitzhenry liked music, she had collected all the best Italian singers; and, with her companion, Emmeline was still occupied in arranging the lights and

instruments, when Pelham and Sir George Saville joined them, but not Fitzhenry. Coffee came; still he did not appear. Half fearful of what she might learn, but not able to bear the suspense any longer, she at length, with an anxious look, enquired whether he was gone out.

“Oh no!” replied Pelham; “he is only answering a letter which he has just received; he will be here directly.”

A flash of her own bright smile instantly re-illuminated her features; and afterwards, in the middle of one of Camporese’s beautiful songs, it glanced again over her countenance, for she saw Fitzhenry enter the room, and, for an instant, caught his eyes fixed upon her. But the song over, and after the ge-

neral stir and bustle that usually follows, she looked for him in vain. The crowd was now every minute thickening, and with difficulty Emmeline forced herself to address to each those common-place remarks which always equally weary those who make them, and those to whom they are made. She restlessly went from room to room on some excuse to herself as well as others, but her search was vain—he was gone!

At once the bright scene totally changed! although the music was beautiful, and the buzz of gaiety and happiness went round. Poor Emmeline, alone in the scene of enjoyment which she had herself created, was wretched. Gladly she at length saw her visitors depart, and the rooms gradually become

empty; for her spirits, which had been so unusually excited, were totally exhausted, and her only object now was, the conclusion of that evening to which she had looked with such bright expectation. Lady Saville and Pelham remained the last.

“Well, my dear Lady Fitzhenry,” said the former, “I staid to the end purposely to congratulate you on the full success of your *soirées*; nothing could have gone off better than they have done; every one declares that nobody understands the matter so well as Lady Fitzhenry. I wonder where you learnt the art,” said she, as she looked, with a complimentary smile, into Emmeline’s face. On that face, tears were slowly, and almost unconsciously steal-

ing down. “Good heavens! Lady Fitzhenry!” exclaimed Lady Saville, “what is the matter?”

“Nothing,” said Emmeline, provoked at her weakness: “but however well I may do the honours of my house, it is a fatigue to which I am new, and perfectly unequal. I have had a bad headache all day; and I find the trouble of being agreeable so much greater than the reward, that however delightful my parties may be, I shall attempt them no more.”

Poor Emmeline spoke in the impatient tone of vexation and disappointment—a tone so unusually heard from her lips, that Lady Saville looked at her astonished.

“How very foolish!” she exclaimed,

“ when nothing of the sort, I am sure, could succeed better, and when you ought to be so pleased and flattered by the general pleasure you have produced. In your place, I should be quite delighted; and then to give it all up merely because you happen at this minute to feel a little tired and exhausted, particularly when you seemed to enjoy it all so much yourself, as I am sure you did only an hour ago. What is it that has gone wrong to make you change your mind so suddenly?”

Emmeline only shook her head in reply; but encountering Pelham's grave look, it recalled to her mind his counsels, and brushing away her tears with her hand, and forcing a smile, she said, as gaily as she could—

“ Well, we need not discuss the matter at present. I will think about it ; but really, now, I must drive you away, and go to bed ; for I am quite knocked up ; and you see fatigue has already made a fool of me, as I dare say, if the truth was told, I cried like a child to think I had eaten my cake, and that these delightful parties were over.”

Lady Saville, taking her hint, was preparing to depart, when Fitzhenry, who, on returning home, had still seen some carriages in the street, and therefore thought he could venture up stairs, entered the room. Lady Saville immediately went up to him. “ Oh, Lord Fitzhenry ! do second me ; for I am trying to persuade your capricious, perverse wife, to give some more parties ;

for she says they don't repay her for the trouble ; that they exhaust her, and that she will have no more. Now have they not been particularly agreeable? and does she not play the part of lady of the revels to perfection?"

Emmeline, who, on her husband's entrance, had walked to the further end of the room, now began busying herself with a basket of flowers, forgetting that she could no longer have any excuse for the employment. As for Fitzhenry, he too seemed rather embarrassed by Lady Saville's direct questions; but soon recollecting himself—"I certainly think Lady Fitzhenry would do very wrong to give up what seemed to give herself, as well as every one else, so much pleasure."

Emmeline bent over the flowers to hide her face, which was crimsoned with pique and impatience, as she repeated to herself—"What gives *me* so much *pleasure!* and that is all I have gained by my last attempt, still more to deceive him as to my real character, and real feelings. He thinks I am to be satisfied with all this noise and empty show of enjoyment; and that it will make up to the worldly fool, the insensible child, for the want of happiness!"

Lady Saville returned to her charge, begging Emmeline would at once name a day, and that she would again endeavour to secure Camporese for her.

Forced to answer, and no longer able even to pretend occupation with the flowers, she hastily composed herself;

and, quietly saying she was too tired then to think of the matter, held out her hand to Lady Saville, wishing her good night.

The altered tone of Emmeline's voice, since he had last heard it, probably struck Fitzhenry, for he hastily raised his eyes towards her. Her countenance, her manner, all was changed; the bright colour in her cheeks was gone; the smile that had played round her mouth had vanished: Pelham's eyes too were fixed upon her, and Fitzhenry observed it. Again he glanced at them both, and then for some minutes seemed totally lost in thought, till Lady Saville, moving towards the door to go, and wishing him good night, he was roused from his reverie; he offered her his arm, and

both he and Pelham went down stairs with her.

For a few minutes, Emmeline listened for Fitzhenry's return—she almost hoped he would enquire into the cause of what he might deem her ill humour : in short, at that moment, she felt she should be glad of any opening from him that could possibly bring matters to a crisis, however painful that crisis might be ; for she felt as if it was impossible to go on enduring her present existence. But, after pacing the room for some time in nervous anxiety, which increased on hearing a footstep on the stairs, she was at length obliged to give up even that hope, as Reynolds alone entered the room, and immediately after, she heard the door of Fitzhenry's apartment close.

Convinced that she had now done all she could ; that she had battled with her fate as much as possible ; and, seeing that every exertion and endeavour to please and win him, only seemed to cast her further from him, she resolved to give over the vain struggle, and for her own sake, at least, endeavour in reality to be the frivolous, heartless being he thought her. And thus, in a sort of desperation, flying from herself, and from a cheerless home, which only reminded her of her blighted youth and hopes, she followed Lady Saville to every dissipation that was proposed. The last, and apparently the gayest, at every amusement ; bright with false smiles and false colours ; poor Emmeline endeavoured to conceal, beneath excited spirits, an aching heart :

but the labour was such, that it allowed of no respite. One day left to herself, her own sad reflections again rushed back, and with increased acuteness—all her disappointed, withered feelings, the suffering present, and the cheerless future, pressed upon her soul. To pause in the mad career of dissipation was therefore impossible. She danced, she laughed, she talked. All shyness, all feeling even, seemed to have vanished, and her eyes sparkled with that feverish dazzle, so unlike the bright sunshine of happiness, but so often mistaken for it by a thoughtless, uninterested observer. How falsely do those of the world mutually pass sentence on each other! Meeting, perhaps, merely in the gay resorts of fashion, each individual attributes to the other that

worldliness and frivolity which belongs to the scene, but which they apply to the character—and how false such judgments are, those may declare, who by peculiar circumstances, or duty of some sort, are drawn into such amusements, when from natural disposition and taste they may be particularly little suited to enjoy them.

Emmeline's looks, health, even temper, all seemed to suffer from the life she now led. Often, after an evening of apparent gaiety, on her return home, she was so agitated, and so ill, that many a night it was only by laudanum that she obtained rest. Jenkins repeatedly observed how "My Lady" was changed; that she never now seemed to know her own mind; that she would

often dress for an evening's amusement, and then, when the time came, dismiss her carriage, and flinging herself, in all her finery, on her bed, would cry bitterly; till, like a child, she fell asleep from mere fatigue; and then, next morning, she would laugh at what she called her nervous folly, and begin again her life of hurry and laborious amusement.

But poor Emmeline, made for better things, felt humbled at herself. Was this the life that a rational, accountable, immortal being should lead? Alas! was this the end of all those dreams of happiness which illumine the mind, and warm the heart of youth? Worn out in body and spirits, Emmeline longed for Arlingford and quiet; and looked forward with

something like pleasure to Easter, when she concluded Fitzhenry would propose going there.

Amid all those who now buzzed and fluttered around her, one friend always followed her steps with interest, one friend she always met with real pleasure. That friend was Pelham. Although he never, since the conversation at Arlingford, had in the most distant manner alluded to the estrangement between her and her husband, yet she could plainly perceive, that he was well aware of their real situation; and she could not help also observing, that, of late, Pelham and Fitzhenry were less cordial together than formerly, although both seemed still anxious, when they met, to carry on the farce of friendship. But Pelham came

much less often to their house than he used to do, and generally at those hours when Fitzhenry was most likely to be from home. This Emmeline every way regretted, she always had felt as if he was a link between them, and she had even vaguely imagined that he might some day have been the means of uniting them ; and, besides the dispiriting conviction that thus, one by one, every hope to which she clung gave way, she could not help feeling painfully aware that it was Pelham's partiality to her, which had estranged her husband from him.

One evening at Almacks, Lady Saville, with whom she had gone, being engaged dancing, Emmeline had sought a refuge from the heat and crowd in the tea-room, and Pelham had followed her.

Half serious, half jesting, he was attacking her upon the life she now led, and upon the impossibility of ever seeing her quietly, and the eternal hurry of pleasure and spirits in which he always found her.

“Why I only do like others,” said Emmeline, with forced gaiety.

“Perhaps so,” replied Pelham. “But you are not like those others whom you imitate and follow. I am sure that all this dissipation cannot satisfy *your* mind, cannot make *you* happy.”

“*Perhaps* not,” said Emmeline, her forced smile fading from her lips; for *happiness* was a word which always grated on her heart, and sounded harsh in her ears.

“But what can I do?—*il faut hurler*

avec les loups," added she, again endeavouring to resume her gaiety.

"This assumed levity cannot take me in," continued Pelham. "I am certain it is impossible but that all this frivolity and fatigue must wear out both your mind and body. How different you were at Arlingford! how little you then seemed to anticipate pleasure from what you now enter into so warmly!"

These were all home truths, which Emmeline could not answer, and she merely stammered out, that she had now no choice.

"Indeed!" replied Pelham, warmly. "You wrong your friends when you say that."

"My friends?" repeated Emmeline, sadly, "I have no friends to——" and

she stopped short, her own words, rousing from the bottom of her heart painful feelings, which she in vain endeavoured to smother by dissipation; and which, by hiding them from others, she hoped to forget herself. She averted her head from Pelham, and fixed her tearful eyes on the ground.

Apparently fearful of going too far, Pelham was also silent; he looked at her with melancholy interest; he could not help observing how greatly she was altered, how much she had lost of the graceful roundness of her form, and how evidently

“Concealment, like a worm in the bud,
Fed on her damask cheek.”

At that minute, Fitzhenry suddenly entered the room, and, hastily coming up

to Pelham, "I have been looking for you this half hour," said he; "I want to speak to you for a minute."

Fitzhenry had spoken these words so quick that it was not till he ended, that the preoccupied look of his auditor seemed to strike him; his eyes glanced from him to Emmeline, and there remained fixed. His sudden entrance had brought the blood into her face, but could not dispel from it the traces of emotion which were very evident; and there was a contrast between the expression of her countenance, the listless neglect of her whole person, and the glittering trappings in which she was attired, that must have struck and interested any one; and which arrested her husband's attention so forcibly, that Emmeline blushed still deeper beneath his gaze.

This seemed to rouse him from the sort of dream in which he appeared to be lost; and suddenly turning to Pelham, “I stopped at your house, and there learnt you were here; I had no idea you ever honoured such places with your presence when you could possibly help it.”

“Sometimes, when the spirit moves me,” answered Pelham, carelessly. “But what is it you have to say to me?”

“I have a message to you from the Speaker, with whom I have been dining,” said Fitzhenry, as if suddenly recollecting his errand, and he drew Pelham aside for a minute. Emmeline then ventured to raise her eyes upon her husband, and could not help, with a sort of melancholy pride, comparing him to those around him, and exulting in his superiority of

look, air, and manner. When his conversation with Pelham was over, he again turned towards Emmeline, and again his eyes were rivetted on her.

“ You have left off dancing, I think, Lady Fitzhenry,” said he, as if he thought it necessary to say something, and hardly knew what; “ I thought you had liked it. Pelham, do you ever dance now ?”

“ It is some time since I was guilty of any thing so frisky,” he replied. “ I should be afraid I might be thought not behaving myself with proper diplomatic gravity ; but as for Lady Fitzhenry, I must say that, in her, it is pure laziness, and therefore most reprehensible, for I have myself heard many a humble application made to her during this last half hour.”

“ We take to ourselves the right to be

fanciful and capricious, you know," said Emmeline, trying to smile.

"Yes, and caprice is sometimes the only thing women are steady to," replied Fitzhenry; while an expression of satirical displeasure seemed to curl his handsome lip.

Emmeline felt she no way deserved that severe remark, and indeed hardly thought he ever noticed her enough even to observe the faults she might have. But in his manner, just then, he was altogether so unlike himself, and had so much the appearance of offended ill humour, that she would have thought something particularly disagreeable had just passed between the two friends, except that she saw Pelham was, as indeed he was always, perfectly mild and composed.

At that moment a very pretty woman, dressed in the height of Parisian fashion, came into the room; and, after acknowledging Mr. Pelham with a familiar bow, addressed Fitzhenry.

“How basely you have deserted me, and forgotten our engagement. I have been looking for you every where. The waltz is nearly over.”

“Ten thousand pardons,” said Fitzhenry rather embarrassed: “I am quite ashamed, but really I had entirely forgotten.”

“That does not mend the matter much,” answered she, laughing, and glancing at Emmeline. “You have, I think, already forgotten your foreign gallantry;” and, taking the arm he offered, they both went into the dancing-room.

“Who is that?” said Emmeline

eagerly, as she followed them with her eyes.

“ It is Mrs. Osterley,” replied Pelham. “ She is a Vienna acquaintance of ours, and just returned from abroad.”

Emmeline again breathed ; but, complaining of the heat of the tea-room, got up and went towards the door. Mr. Pelham smiled on her in compassion as he drew her arm within his, and suffered her to lead him which way she chose, and they soon found themselves among the crowd of waltzers. Fitzhenry was then dancing with Mrs. Osterley, and when they stopped, it was close by Emmeline ; though an intervening waltzing pair, also pausing in their giddy labours, hid her entirely from their view.

“ Who was that you were talking to

in the tea-room when I went to claim you so inconsiderately?" said Mrs. Osterley to her partner.

"Don't you know?" answered he, rather embarrassed by the question, or rather by the manner in which it was put; "it was Lady Fitzhenry."

"Lady Fitzhenry! your wife! you surprise me! what a very pretty woman she is! I had heard her so differently described; she is an uncommonly interesting looking person, *vraiment je vous en fais mon compliment.*"

Fitzhenry bowed; and Emmeline could see that the mantling blood had tinged even his forehead.

"And from what I further heard," continued his gay companion, looking archly in his face, "I should have thought you were the last man to have

been detected in a flirtation with your wife; though really, now I have seen her, I do not wonder she should have made you a little *volage*."

"I had gone in search of Pelham," said Fitzhenry, coldly, apparently much disconcerted by her remark.

"Oh! is that the way of it?" retorted Mrs. Osterley laughing: "well, I really cannot pity you; it is but fair play, for you richly deserve it. But is Pelham really at last caught? Well, I shall be truly curious to become acquainted with the piece of perfection who has had power to overcome his impenetrable insensibility—pray do introduce me to *your wife*." And she again laughed more heartily than before.

Fitzhenry did not, as she seemed to have expected, join in the laugh; and,

with a smile of contempt, she added, “ Surely *you* don’t think it incumbent upon you to play the English husband and be angry, for that would be taking a very unnecessary degree of trouble, I should think.”

Luckily, Pelham’s attention had, during this conversation, been attracted another way, so that Emmeline had gently withdrawn her arm, and the crowd had soon divided them. Disgusted with Mrs. Osterley’s levity, and fearful that Fitzhenry might perceive her, she drew back, although she would have given much to have heard his answer. She soon again saw them in the giddy round, and went to a seat which she observed to be unoccupied.

She had not been there long, before Miss Selina Danvers flew up to her, with

ecstasy in her looks, and a perfect parterre of flowers in her head, and seizing her hand vehemently, “ Well, my dear Lady Fitzhenry, here I am ! actually at Almacks ! and all owing to you, I am sure, I am more obliged to you than I can express. What an enchanting place it is ! But only think how abominably those odious lady patronesses have behaved ! After all, mamma has no ticket ! Did you ever hear any thing like it ? It is quite atrocious. I really thought I should have died with anxiety when we came to Willis’s room this morning to hear our fate ; and my heart sank within me when I saw how full the street was of carriages, for we got into a regular string just like a ball—so delightful ! We were there full an hour and a half waiting, but I am sure

it was well worth while, and I really believe I screamed with joy when I saw my ticket; but, as I said before, there was none for mamma; so then we had to drive all over the town to find a *chaperon* for me to go with; at last we went to Lady Coddington, and only think! she had got one for herself, and none for her daughter! Did you ever hear any thing so shocking! And she was so cross and sulky about it at first, that she said she would not go; but by abusing the lady patronesses, we got her into good-humour, and she agreed to take me; but, between ourselves, she is a very disagreeable *chaperon*; for out of spite, I suppose, because her ugly daughter could not get a ticket, she won't try and get me a partner; and, odious woman, she

came so late that the evening is already more than half over. I suppose you know all the men here, Lady Fitzhenry, don't you?"

"Very few dancers," said Emmeline, not feeling at all inclined to press Selina on any of her acquaintance.

"Dear! there is Mr. Moore!" exclaimed the young lady, already in a flutter of expectation; "and I do believe he is coming this way; and we danced constantly together at Arlingford, you know."

That was true; but dancing and diverting himself with the simple Selina at Arlingford, and selecting her as his partner at Almacks, were two very different things; and after making her a distant, chilling bow, Mr. Moore sat down on the other side of Emmeline. Poor Selina's

countenance fell. Moore went on talking, *sotto-voce*, to Emmeline, till Selina could bear it no longer.

“Dear, Mr. Moore! how come you not to be dancing? I thought you liked it of all things!”

“I may ask you the same question,” returned he.

“Oh no, perhaps nobody has asked me,” answered Selina, pettishly.

“That is quite impossible; I will not suppose any thing so disgraceful to the taste and judgment of all the smart young gentlemen I see here,” added he, carelessly, and then returned to his affectedly interesting conversation with Emmeline, who listened apparently quite unworthy of the honour conferred on her. Selina saw with mortification that nothing was to be hoped from Mr. Moore.

But just then, a foppishly dressed young man, coming up and speaking to Emmeline, Selina's spirits revived : she touched her arm, whispering, " Who is that? could you introduce me to him?" At first Emmeline paid no attention, but Selina's pinches became so urgent, that she at last was obliged to say : " Lord William Vernon, will you allow me to introduce my friend, Miss Danvers, to you?"

For a minute, an expression of displeasure animated Lord William's unmeaning countenance : he made Selina a slight bow with his head, as he took a hasty survey of her person ; and after saying something very uninteresting about the heat of the room, to Emmeline, and enlarging on the merits of a newly purchased cabriolet-horse, to Moore, he walked away.

Poor Selina bit her lip in vexation, and finding she did not thrive at all in her present situation, jumped up to see what could be done with her cross *chaperon*, whom she had spied in conversation with a gentleman at the opposite side of the room.

“How in the name of wonder came Miss Danvers here?” exclaimed Moore, as soon as she had left them—“what could possess the lady patronesses to give her a ticket?”

“I applied for one for her,” answered Emmeline.

“I think that was rather a work of supererogation on your part,” continued Moore. “You surely are not going to hamper yourself with that girl: you soon frightened away Vernon, trembling for his newly acquired dignity in the hierarchy

of fashion; and I must give you notice, if you take to introducing Miss Selina Danvers about, even you, even Lady Fitzhenry, charming as she is, will be voted a bore. What business has that sort of girl here? and how can she be so unreasonable as to expect to be asked to dance? it is perfect nonsense—she had much better stick to her Hampshire county ball; there she may play *un grand rôle*. Misses are really sad nuisances in society, unless they sit quiet, and don't trouble one; so take my advice Lady Fitzhenry. Good-nature is quite *mauvais ton* in London—it is a bad style to take up, and will never do. But it is impossible to sit still and moralize when Collinet is playing that waltz so delightfully; will you take a turn or two with me?"

"I will resign the honour to Miss

Danvers," said Emmeline, laughing—"and luckily she is just coming this way; so do the thing handsomely, and ask the poor girl, for she knows nobody here, and is dying to dance."

"Oh, if you are really serious, I am off," said Moore, and hastily seizing his hat, which he had hid under the seat in preparation for his waltz with Lady Fitzhenry, he hurried away.

Although little inclined to merriment, Emmeline could not help laughing—the smile on her countenance caught Pelham's eye, and he came up to her to enquire what had amused her. Emmeline told Selina's sad tale.

"Poor thing!" said Pelham. "But this is a new character Moore has taken up, I think, for he set out much more wisely, with the determination to enjoy every

amusement that came in his way, professing openly a love for dancing and gaiety of every kind : but fashion, or what is called, in its slang, *being fine*, is so catching a disease that none can escape. It has taken the place of the small-pox ; and I think it would be a good plan if we could be inoculated for it, so as to secure having it mildly, and of the best sort. I don't know how *you* manage to be *what* and *where* you are in the world without it ; but pray don't follow Moore's advice on the subject—let us have *one* specimen of a good-natured London fine lady. By the bye, I too have some advice to give you, which is, not to make up to that Mrs. Osterley : she was reckoned at Vienna *a tres mauvaise langue*, and was always making *tracasseries*.

She has a gay, and apparently an artless manner, which at first takes one in. Fitzhenry never liked her, so you need not be acquainted with her; and I should really counsel you to avoid her.

There was little necessity to give Emmeline that caution: what she had already heard, had not prepossessed her in Mrs. Osterley's favour in any way; but at that minute, the two people of whom they were talking came up.

“Mrs. Osterley begs to be introduced to you, Lady Fitzhenry,” said her husband, with an evident painful embarrassment of manner. Emmeline got up, and returned the salutation, though with a coldness which she could not overcome, but which did not seem at all to

discompose the person to whom it was addressed.

“ As an old friend of Lord Fitzhenry’s,” continued Mrs. Osterley, “ I feel I have a right to claim acquaintance with you, and I trust you will allow me to endeavour to improve it.” And she seated herself by Emmeline, who again bowed in silence ; for never before had she felt so totally at a loss for some of those usual phrases which mean nothing, but which fill up the awkward pause, apt to take place after a first introduction ; and Fitzhenry no way helped her. He appeared to be completely discomposed ; and, under pretence of seeing an acquaintance, removed to a distance. Mrs. Osterley finding Emmeline did not speak, continued :—

“ It is so long since I have been in England, that I hardly know any one : quite a new set and generation have started up ; and my *English* acquaintances are merely those whom I have known abroad—by the bye, Mr. Pelham, are the Mostyns in town ? ”

“ I believe they have left it,” said he, coldly.

„ Of course you know them,” continued Mrs. Osterley to Emmeline—
“ Mr. Mostyn is so particular a friend of Lord Fitzhenry’s.”

“ No, I have never met them,” answered Emmeline, commanding her voice as well as she could, though she felt her face was to a great degree betraying her feelings.

“ You surprise me,” continued her

tormenter. “But I suppose you and my friend Lord Fitzhenry have been ruralizing, and sentimentalizing alone in the country, *à la mode Anglaise*, since your marriage, and I cannot wonder at either of you preferring that to the most agreeable society,” added she, with a complimentary smile. “After Easter, I suppose every body will be in town ; and I trust Lady Florence will then return among the number, for I really feel quite in a strange country. I am now so little used to the forms, and cold, stiff proprieties of English ways, that, to tell the truth, I find London very dull and stupid, and was really delighted to-night, when I saw Lord Fitzhenry, to talk over delightful foreign days with him. Mr. Pelham, don’t you find English society

much changed for the worse ? I think my country folks are pleasanter any where than in their own land ; for, here they directly put on their native buckram again, and are so prodigiously good and proper, that there is no living with them.”

“ I can’t agree with you,” replied Pelham. “ I am so stupid, as to like them better at home : abroad, they are too apt to cast off some of the restraints which the opinions of their own country oblige them to submit to, without adopting those of the nations they visit. In short, the case is the same with manners as with religion ;—they cease to be protestants without becoming catholics ; and they take advantage of the usual laxity of morals and principles of other coun-

tries, without acquiring that outward decorum of manner, which at least prevents such conduct from offending the innocent; without, in short, adopting that excusable hypocrisy, which a French author so justly calls *l'hommage que le vice rend à la vertu*, an English woman rarely ceases to be virtuous, without becoming coarse; a foreigner may understand *le metier* better, but my own opinion is—that there are few of my countrywomen much the better for a long residence on the continent.”

“The present company always excepted, of course,” said Mrs. Osterley, bowing to him. “Mr. Pelham is no complimenter, as I dare say you find, Lady Fitzhenry; for I believe you have the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with him.”

Fortunately for Emmeline, a new waltz just then began; and Fitzhenry, to make up for his former negligence, came again to claim Mrs. Osterley as his partner, although seemingly against his will. As they went away together, Emmeline heard her say to Fitzhenry—

“ I am not sure I admire your Lady Fitzhenry so much on nearer view as I did at first sight. She is terribly *English*; so cold and distant—and I see already she dislikes me for being the reverse; *et que je n'ai pas l'honneur de lui plaire.*”

What Fitzhenry replied, Emmeline did not hear; and, as it was now late, and that she was wearied both in body and mind, she begged of Pelham to ask for her carriage, desiring him to tell Lady Saville she would send it back for her, if she had not ordered her own.

They crossed the room in silence : poor Emmeline taking one last look of Fitzhenry, as he was still waltzing with Mrs. Osterley.

“ That is a spiteful little devil,” said Pelham, who well knew whither Emmeline’s eyes had wandered ; “ and I again advise you to keep clear of her ; she hates both Fitzhenry and me ; for, the truth is, she tried to turn both our heads alternately, and succeeded with neither : Fitzhenry had too much good taste to be taken in by any thing so glaring.”

Emmeline made no comment, but sighed deeply. Her sigh was echoed by one close to her ; and, turning round, she saw poor Selina, cloaked up to her ears, following her hard-hearted *chaperon* down the stairs which she had so

lately mounted in such glee ; the evening to which she had looked forward so long, with so much ecstasy, already over—and having to her been productive of nothing but mortification and disappointment.

“ Good night, Lady Fitzhenry,” said she, sadly :—“ for you see I am going : but I am sure I don’t care ; there is nobody here one knows, and though it is a ball, nobody *will* dance : it is the oddest thing I ever saw. However, it is very well to come once, just to be able to say one has been at Almacks, for that sounds well ; but I declare I think it the stupidest place I ever was at, and I wonder how people can make such a fuss about it.”

The loud welcome cry of “ Lady Fitz-

henry's carriage stops the way," prevented any more of Selina's peevishness being heard, and Emmeline returned to her solitary home. But harmless, un-presuming, and innocent as she was, in absenting herself, she had left her character behind her ; and from that evening, (thanks to Mrs. Osterley,) all London talked of and laughed at the decided *affair* between Lady Fitzhenry and Mr. Pelham ; each narrator telling his own story, and inventing such facts as each found wanting to render it plausible. Emmeline, however, lost nothing in the good opinion of the fashionable world by this report, which was treated, by some, as an excellent joke ; by others, as a thing of course ; and many of those who thus carelessly discussed the matter,

and at once deprived poor Emmeline of her good name, might have ended their remarks, if they had had honest consciences, with Lady Saville's first words of praise to Emmeline: "She is really quite on a par with ourselves."

END OF VOL I.

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